

Stephen B. Baugh.

THE
YOUNG MINISTER;

OR,

Memoirs and Remains

OF

STEPHEN BEEKMAN BANGS,
OF THE NEW-YORK EAST CONFERENCE.

By W. H. N. MAGRUDER, M. A.

WITH A PREFACE,

By ERASTUS O. HAVEN, M. A.

"Thou should'st be with us now.
With *us*? We wrong thee by the earthly thought.
Could our fond gaze but follow where thou art,
Well might the glories of this world seem nought
To the one promise given the pure in heart."

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PREFACE.

WHY publish the memoirs of another young minister of the gospel? Simply because another, worthy of the honour, has lived and died, and we desire that the press shall do its legitimate work, and perpetuate and extend the impression made by the young man while he lived. Full well we know the weakness of the press in this work. It cannot represent the kindling eye, the manly bearing, the various emphasis of the man; still less can it awaken in the stranger that kindly feeling, which by his presence he could always produce; but it can aid the memory of those who have seen and heard him, and long protract the usefulness of his short and holy life.

STEPHEN BEEKMAN BANGS was a man whom many, having seen and heard, will never forget. There are some whose life-currents have been totally changed by his influence, and who, in old age, or in heaven, will look back upon a history entirely different from what it would have been but for him. He differed from many men whose names are household words, and whom thousands rise up and call blessed, in just one particular—

they lived long lives, his life was short. So far as it extended, it was of the same nature and quality, of which the following memoirs and writings are sufficient proof. We commit this volume, then, to the public with a good conscience, begging that it may be received, partly as a tribute of friendship to him whose name it bears, and partly as an effort to extend the influence of one, who, being dead, yet speaketh.

The accompanying memoir was written by Professor W. H. N. Magruder, brother-in-law of the deceased; and all competent to decide will acknowledge it to be truthful, and entirely free from flattery.

Stephen B. Bangs was a young man of large promise, particularly from the extraordinarily elevating and strengthening influence which the religion of Christ seemed to exert upon him. After conversion he was emphatically, and in every sense, a new man. Previous to this he was an accomplished gentleman, and was considered a good scholar, a man of fair talents and promise, and perhaps nothing more. But the event proved, what a sagacious observer might have previously detected, that there was a tremendous latent power within him; the energies of his soul were not half aroused, till the power of the gospel seized upon him, and the enthusiasm of a Paul urged him to action. Who has not seen similar examples? And when, as in this case, the subject of it has a cultivated and

well-stored mind, and a wide sweep of observation, who shall set limits to his power?

Perhaps he lived too fast, and accomplished too much. If so, the Lord has pardoned him. He was not permitted (neither was Summerfield, though he anxiously desired it) to live as long on earth as his Saviour, still he lived long enough to accomplish far more than many who reach old age. It is proper to observe, that his manuscript sermons, a few of which are here published, were written after their first delivery; it being his practice, as we learn from his journal, to write out the sermons early in the week, delivered on the previous Sabbath. This he did to discipline himself to a proper style, and as far as possible to combine the advantages of careful study with extemporaneous speaking. His usual custom was to preach without notes, the Bible being closed before him, free to avail himself of thoughts suggested at the time, and by the Holy Spirit. He wrote with remarkable ease and rapidity, and his manuscripts need no revision for the press. But a small portion of what he wrote is presented in this book. His appearance in the sacred desk was solemn and impressive, his power as a pulpit orator extraordinary; all of which we believe was principally owing to the entire surrender of his strong mind, and equally strong passions, to Christ; so that, with a perfect abandonment of self, he entered with all his heart into the work of the ministry. He was not

violent, but earnest; never overcome, but, like a truly great man, capable of bearing and directing the strong feelings of a noble heart. His death was so triumphant that the description of it comes far short of the fact. It was the fitting close of a brilliant, though short religious life.

We will only add that there are some classes who may derive peculiar profit from a study of this book. Young ministers of the gospel may deduce from it the elements of a happy and prosperous professional career. Students may be led to inquire closely into their duty, and may be prepared conscientiously to decide whether or not God is calling them to the responsible work of the Christian ministry. Parents may see the effect of a careful and rigid and truly kind training of their children. And finally, all may be stimulated to a holy life by the energetic and eloquent discourses that follow. With these observations, this tribute of affection is committed to the world with the happy consciousness that it is good seed, and that, rightly used, it can bear only fruit to ripen in the skies.

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1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of a solution of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the system of equations (1) has a solution for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

2. In the second part of the paper the problem of the existence of a solution of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system of equations (1) has a solution for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

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OF

STEPHEN BEEKMAN BANGS.

CHAPTER I.

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DLETOWN, CONN.—LOSES RELIGION—RETIRES ON ACCOUNT OF
ILLNESS—LETTER TO A CLASS-MATE.

THE man who has lived long, mingled with soci-
ety, perhaps moulded its character, and been a
conspicuous object for years, is deemed *worthy*
of a biography or memoir—and it is well. But
to what end are biographies of the good written,
or, more properly, with what object *ought* they
to be written? Is it to honour the dead, or to
benefit the living? to perpetuate among men the
name which belongs only to a *mortal*, or, while
the glory of God is thereby promoted, to induce
others, by an emulation of his life, to strive after
a share of the immortal honour which he has
attained now in a better land? To this question

there can be but one answer. They that are honoured of God can receive no additional credit from the posthumous praises of men. It is the example that is needed, and the good influence of the example should be the object aimed at by the Christian biographer.

Let, then, the experiences of the aged be given to warn and encourage, to guide and restrain the young who are toiling into life, and would prepare themselves to meet its trials and its requisitions. But shall the *young* saint die and be forgotten? Shall his bright, though brief, example be lost to others? Shall the heavenly lustre which surrounded the departing spirit be diffused no farther than the chamber of death? Shall the triumphant notes of victory, which none save the soldier of the cross can sound, die away ere they have fused courage and strength into every young heart that beats for heaven? Shall he of whom God has greatly honoured the young, not be permitted to preach Christ by the record of a pure life and a joyous death? Is it not true that he who dies with the harness on—dies in the triumphs of faith, dies in sight of heaven, and with glory upon his lips—has performed his Master's work as fully as the *veteran*, who has lived and toiled steadily and long, and gone to his reward? Yes! Let us acknowledge God's goodness and providence wherever seen.

No apology, therefore, is necessary for introducing to the public the character of one, who,

though but young in years, was nevertheless old in the wisdom that cometh from above; and dying a youth, left the world better behind him, and has gone unquestionably to the bliss of immortality in heaven.

STEPHEN BEEKMAN BANGS, son of Rev. Heman and Sarah Bangs, was born in the city of New-York, March 15th, 1823. Even in his early childhood there were exhibitions of strikingly characteristic traits which seemed to promise extraordinary piety. His venerable and pious father has often expressed a confident belief that Stephen experienced a change of heart at a period much earlier than such experience is usually accredited to children; and in his early character there was, to say the least, striking evidence of a decided religious bias. As life advanced, he took delight in the exhilarating but innocent amusements of youth. There was nothing to sadden his feelings, nothing to mar his enjoyments, nothing to depress his spirits, or retard the development of his moral and intellectual or social qualities. It was, therefore, but natural that he should relax to some extent into the want of special interest on the subject of religion which is common to that age when the line of accountability is hardly defined. In his fourteenth year, with nothing in this respect to distinguish him from other boys who have had the advantage of pious instruction, he entered upon his preparatory course of studies in the Wesleyan

Academy at Wilbraham, Massachusetts. While there, he was called to mourn the loss of his only brother, in circumstances peculiarly afflicting, and well calculated to make a deep impression upon his youthful mind.

AARON COKE BANGS, having resided some two years in Columbus, Miss., had returned in the summer of 1837, with the two-fold object of visiting his home, and being present at the marriage of his eldest sister. Before the object of his visit had been accomplished, he received news of the death of a special friend, to whom he felt himself indebted for numerous acts of kindness received when a stranger in a strange land. He immediately cut short his visit and set out for the South, to offer his aid and sympathy to the bereaved family of his friend. Alas! that family he was never to see. He found a watery grave, with many others, through the wreck of the steamship "Home," a disaster which caused many a heart to bleed for the loss of some dear relative or friend. This melancholy event made a deep impression upon the mind of Stephen, and he began to look for comfort to Him who alone can bind up the broken heart. A few weeks after, while on a visit to his home in Hartford, Conn., he made a public profession of religion, and for several years strove to manifest, by a conscientious discharge of every duty, that he had "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." Who can fail to see in this the

reawakening of early piety, and the reward of his parents' early care?

As I was riding, not long since, in company with a highly gifted young man, the son of a venerable minister of the gospel, he remarked to me that there was nothing for which he felt more grateful to his father than for permitting him to do as he pleased. "Go," was the language of the father, "take your own course; think for yourself, act for yourself. If you desire an education, you can have it; if not, I will give you the equivalent of its cost in money." Such a remark hardly deserves a comment, but the character of the young man who quoted it suggested naturally enough the reflection, that had that father held a steadier rein, and taken a little more immediate and careful supervision of his son's moral and intellectual training, he would not now be perverting his superior talents to corrupt the young whom they attract; nor would he be, as now, bringing into dishonour a name heretofore associated with the cause of truth, the cause of God. He would not now be perverting an office, secured to him in part by that name, to subvert the principles of orthodox Christianity, which his father has been labouring nearly half a century to inculcate for the good of man and the glory of God; nor using the personal influence attained by unusual gifts, to instil the insidious poison of disguised infidelity into the minds of the young and unwary.

It is far too common for parents, arrogating to themselves superior sagacity as to the development of the youthful mind and heart, to *boast* that they will not control the bias of their children's minds, nor fetter them by constraining them to learn those things for which they have no taste. It is a philosophy as false in itself as its practice is ruinous to the child. It is assuming a great deal, and that contrary to the plainest suggestions of nature and the manifest teachings of Providence, to say that the child is better prepared to direct his own course than the parent is to guide him. It is virtually either denying the great doctrine which makes an atonement necessary, or avowing a reckless disregard of the child's everlasting interests, to suffer him, as these mistaken parents say, to grow up free from all religious prepossessions and predilections, that he may be able when his mind is matured to judge for himself, and adopt whatever opinions he may find most in accordance with his inclinations and tastes. It is not too much to pronounce such a course one of glaring absurdity. Life, take it as we will, is a course of education; and, unless those upon whom it devolves as a rightful and natural duty employ all diligence to give it a proper direction, the adversary of souls will step in with abundant and skilful educators to infect the young mind with the poison of infidelity, and defile with every moral pollution the tablet

which they ought to have guarded, but which they have in fact kept *pure*, but, in their shortsightedness, *only* from the holy precepts of the religion of Christ. Let parents *toil* to grave indelibly upon the minds and hearts of their children the great leading truths of the gospel. Nay, more—it is a manifest and unmistakable duty; and the Christian hazards much in neglecting it to teach them whatever even of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, deemed vital by orthodox Churches, they themselves conscientiously embrace as truth. What! shall a parent deliberately or blindly deliver over the sacred trust committed to him—the training of the immortal mind—to the teaching of the arch-enemy? This principle amounts to nothing more; for, leave him to himself, and as sure as the carnal mind is enmity against God, he will almost inevitably pursue that animal instinct which leads to all manner of self-indulgence, rather than betake him to those laborious pursuits and the formation of those regular habits which are necessary to develop the true nobility of his nature. From this very assumption, unwisely uttered and practised upon by parents toward their children, has resulted an irretrievable waste of mind, and the perdition of numberless immortal souls.

I well remember, in the boyhood of young Bangs, to have heard the fear anxiously expressed that he would not accomplish anything worthy of himself, nor at all commensurate with the

wishes of his parents. His aversion to study was marked and decided. The school-room was his dread, and he often declared that he would rather toil at a trade than frequent it. Had he then been left to his own inclinations, he would have been seduced by them into the neglect of an unusually fine mind. His prudent father, however, under a patient and uniform discipline, held him on with a steady hand to that course which he judged best for the true interests of his child. And abundant was his reward, both in the character and gratitude of that son. The duties performed at first by constraint gradually grew into habit. His repugnance to study, especially of the classic tongues, was gradually overcome, and he entered upon his collegiate studies with eagerness and delight. The broad field of literature was open before him, and he entered with a mind prepared to discern and appreciate its beauties, and with a thirst for knowledge which stimulated to vigorous effort and untiring diligence.

His college career was characterized by unusual activity and success. He especially took great delight in the literary societies of which he was a member, and devoted much of his time and abilities to their interests. "With his mind thus engrossed," says one who, by constant association, was familiar alike with his feelings and actions, "religious duties were gradually neglected until he entirely lost the power of godli-

ness; yet the high sense of honour predominant in his breast would not suffer him to overstep the bounds of decorum." During the third year of his collegiate course he left the Wesleyan University, on account of ill health. The period of the suspension of his studies was spent partly in travel, and partly in the bosom of his father's family, in the city of New-York. The following extract from a letter to an intimate friend and college associate will serve to illustrate his feelings at this period of his life:—

NEW-YORK, Sept. 6, 1842.

“Nevertheless, I feel that I am a different person from what I was six months ago. I care less for the world, its frivolities and fashion—indeed, I begin to loathe them. In the eagerness of my youthful day-dreams I have fondly anticipated *honour*, and visions of applause and distinction have risen before my eyes, and amidst all this I have at times selected *the law* as the grand theatre on which I might win my laurels. But how vain! how foolish! I feel it. I must acknowledge that an *impression* is gaining upon me, is deepening, that I am designed, yea, destined, for the holy ministry. How the idea has worked itself upon me I know not, and I shrink from entertaining it when I look on the stupendous duties and responsibilities of such a life. It may be a fancy, yet it seems a conviction. One thing which leads me to think it a mere

fancy, a mistaken notion, is my sense of my own insufficiency, and the fear that my powers will not sustain me, and that my zeal being above my knowledge, I have not the talent competent for the trying work. Now, you see, I have made you my confessor. I have spoken with you as I have never spoken with another; and no one thinks I entertain such thoughts as I have expressed."

CHAPTER II.

GRADUATES AT NEW-YORK UNIVERSITY—HIS STUDIES, WRITINGS,
ORATORY—RECLAIMED—LETTER TO A CLASS-MATE.

WHEN his health had been sufficiently recruited to justify his resuming study, he entered the "University of the City of New-York," where he remained one year, and graduated under Chancellor Frelinghuysen in the summer of 1843. During the term of his college life he sustained a high character for integrity and uprightness—prudent in his intercourse, never betraying a trust that was committed to him, and proving himself by his fidelity worthy of the confidence reposed in him.

In his educational pursuits, he aimed at high attainments in all the departments of science and the arts which constitute the usual disciplinary education of our best colleges. His favourite department, however, was the belles lettres, and in this he laboured with diligence, success, and delight. His public orations were characterized by purity of style, maturity of thought, and tastefulness of expression, unusual to one of his age. On his oration at the anniversary of the *Eucleian Society*, the following criticism appeared in the "New-York Express:"—

"Tenth oration and last. 'The Moral with the Mental:' S. Beekman Bangs. This was the

last and the best—the gem of the whole. It alone contained more true *beauty* of thought and expression than did all the others united. It abounded in figures; but, like the flowers which deck the banks of the purling brook; they turned not, they delayed not, but merely beautified the silvery current of thought which flowed beneath them. It was truly a splendid production. His delivery was dignified, his enunciation clear and forcible, but (unfortunately for himself and audience) at times so low as to be inaudible to many.”

In the elocutionary qualities of the orator he excelled. His appearance was commanding, his bearing dignified, his delivery easy and graceful. It is not the design of this sketch to forestall criticism by the expression of an opinion upon his writings. It is enough, and but justice, to say that not one of the manuscripts which have been found was designed for publication. They all bear upon their face the evidence of being original draughts.

While he was a student in the University of the city of New-York, a revival of religion took place in his father's church, in Forsyth-street. Here he became thoroughly reawakened on the subject of his soul's salvation, and after a protracted season of conflict was powerfully reclaimed. In a letter to the same friend before mentioned, we have his own relation of this interesting event:—

NEW-YORK, *Feb. 27, 1843.*

But, my dear old chum, I have still more gratifying communication than this. As you say, it does seem as though a combination of pressing circumstances had been thrown around me to draw me to the foot of the cross. Some are known to you, some are not. You are acquainted with my life during the past year or two sufficiently to judge of my religious condition, which has been woful enough. The Lord has been carrying on a most gracious work of conversion and revival in this charge, and some whom I highly esteemed have been turned from the error of their ways. I attended the meetings regularly for some time before I could bring my proud heart to believe it possible to kneel an humble suppliant at the altar of prayer. But I saw around me young men on whom I might exert a saving influence, and who, perchance, were procrastinating for my example; I saw myself about to engage in the activity of life, and I felt that I could not do it without religion as my guiding star; I had a rational conviction of the divine truth of the Christian faith, my destitution, and need of it; and these considerations, with other minor ones, at last induced the determined position to seek religion till I should find the Saviour to the joy of my soul. It was a heavy task upon my proud heart to humble itself at the altar when the eyes of so many were upon me; but the step I took was the result of

long and calm consideration—it was no transient impulse; but the strivings of the Holy Spirit, which you know have long been working in me, were brought to a crisis. It was, then, a step of determined resolution that nothing should swerve me from the course I had adopted. I went to the altar eight evenings, I think, when at last the burden of sin was removed, and I felt peaceful, sweetly assured that I was accepted of my heavenly Father. But I gave way to the temptations of the adversary, and for three or four days was in the most harassing state imaginable. I concluded that I had not experienced any change of heart, and still I knew not how to account for my singular feelings on the previous evening. At length, under a sermon of father's, upon the Witness of the Spirit, my soul was enabled to rejoice, without a doubt, in the pardon of my sins and regeneration of my heart. This was two or three weeks since. I feel myself altogether a new creature; whereas I shunned the ordinances of God's house, now I love the means of grace. I love to tell of the mercy of Heaven to my rebellious spirit. I love to exhort my companions to leave their worldly follies and seek this 'pearl of great price.' You will, I doubt not, be glad to hear this, and I am glad to be able to tell it. It rejoiced me much, just after my conversion, to meet with H——, of the W. U., who was returning from home in Pennsylvania, where he had spent the vacation, and

to find that he had come forth as a bold and decided Christian. It is delightful to see those whom we have held in friendship thus renouncing the world, and giving us a hope of meeting them in heaven. Yes, William, I think much of heaven, of its mysteries, and I delight to think of its unknown joys; for I feel that I have an inheritance there, a mansion prepared by my Saviour's love, a 'portion fair'—and what wonder that my *heart* is there? I have often thought that my life would not be a long one, and it has been a gloomy thought; but, praise to the name of the Lord, the light of eternal life and glory plays about all my thoughts of death and the grave, and the one is robbed of his sting and the other of its victory. O, my dear William, I would not *now* part with this earnest of everlasting life for ten thousand worlds of earthly pleasures! How different my sentiments, my prospects, from those which were the food of my soul during the year we spent in happy connexion at the W. U.! Those precious but neglected privileges of grace, how often and sorrowfully do they *now* rise to my startled view! I have entertained, and been free in expressing, my belief, that it was a moral impossibility for a student to live in the close enjoyment of religion while engaged in his college pursuits; but if I had those three years to live over again, with my present views of this life and the life to come, I reckon my actions and my words would

be far different. Those seasons are gone with their record, and the present is all we have to claim. The Lord is manifesting his power very graciously in all the Churches of the city. Sometimes the breathings of the Holy Spirit almost incite me to enlist among the messengers of this gospel; and my longing for the salvation of immortal spirits almost makes me believe, at times, the Spirit of the living God would speak through me. My highest ambition *now* would be, to make an *efficient Methodist preacher*. The Methodist pulpit seems to me the greatest arena for the powers of man that this life's engagements afford. O, if I could only possess the talents, if I could command the readiness of thought and expression of many, I would eagerly embrace the first opening for proclaiming the news which the name of Jesus presents to lost sinners!"

CHAPTER III.

REMARKS ON THE CHOICE OF HIS PROFESSION—MENTAL CONFLICTS

—VIEWS OF THE MINISTRY—JOURNAL.

It has been already remarked that Stephen had, from an early period of his student-life, looked to the profession of the law as the chosen field of his intellectual efforts. Everything in his character and pursuits conspired to mature these youthful aspirations into a purpose. The ambition natural to a virtuous, well-endowed, and carefully cultivated mind, his passionate love of eloquence, his admiration of its best personifications, his devotion to that department of liberal learning which was best calculated to fit him for such a position, with the course open and the goal before him, as they ever are to the noble youth of free and appreciating America, all seemed to point him to a bright career of usefulness, and surround the pathway of the future with the light of hope. Yet, notwithstanding all his aspirations after worldly honour, with bright visions of fame, doubtless, floating before his mind, with character, influence and friendships, all combining to make the promise of success almost its fulfilment, he was not rash in his decision, and had never fully determined what course of life he would pursue. His private reflections, committed to writing, show how

rationally, and how carefully and thoroughly he weighed all the advantages and disadvantages of the several professions, not only in reference to his own peculiar interests and ambitions, but also to the facilities afforded by each for the exercise of that generous philanthropy which embraces all mankind in its schemes of usefulness.* Whilst he was bestowing much careful thought upon these subjects, the pulpit and its sacred demands did not pass without their proper consideration—not as a profession, nor as a position to be sought by an aspirant after the world's honours or rewards, but as a holy office toward which he felt the drawings of the Holy Spirit, yet, though possessing its attractions, involving duties and responsibilities which he would fain have evaded if he dared. On this subject his own words are the best interpreter of the views and feelings he entertained, and the mental conflicts he had to pass through. They appear to have been penned after he had committed himself to the preaching of God's word, but during a period of hesitancy, of almost halting, between obedience to the strong convictions of heart which were impelling him into the sublime and holy office of the ministry of Christ, and the self-distrust and irresolution which bade him shrink from responsibilities to which he felt himself inadequate. They are under date of "*January 24, 1844.*—The youth knows no more

* See the paper marked "Choice of a Profession."

troubled and care-worn hour than when he would measure the future as his theatre of earnest life—especially when the great burden of *duty* is rolled upon his thought. In his reflections upon the history of the heart's workings, manifested in the lives of men, and in his anticipations of the arena of human action, with the sacrifices called for at his hands, sometimes strangely incongruous, he presents a spectacle of interest. In such meditations I have had my share. For several years, even in the indecision and perplexities of irreligion, my thoughts have been directed to the declaration of the word of God as the business that would engross my life. How early these impressions began their operation I know not, but quite early. They were nurtured in ambitious dreams of the dignity and sway of the pulpit orator, the scope of his influence over the hearts of men, and partook little of the sacredness and awe since thrown around this highest calling. Eloquence always seemed to me the noblest gift to man, and the oratory of the pulpit was elevated above all others within the reach of its interest and destiny. Such feelings have been fostered whenever I could hang upon the lips of the man of God eminent for his stirring appeals. Often have I been rapt in the eager desire to stand in the holy place, but the full consciousness of my unworthiness and inability has hitherto scarcely allowed me confidently to expect it. And the desire may die in

its birth. Associated with these longings have been hindrances and drawbacks perhaps unknown to the multitude of those who go out to their labour of love. With a high conception of the purity necessary for success and saving influence upon the souls of men, I have to struggle with natural pollutions which stand up and seem to defy every effort; indeed, at times, withering doubts of the divine efficacy of the atoning blood to cleanse from all sin confound my energy. Besides, with an almost unhesitating conviction of the will of the Lord concerning me urging on in the way of duty, the means of religious service, the constant enduring of the cross, the requisite preparation for ministry at God's altar, I have, to be subdued, a pervading diffidence which cripples thought and binds the tongue in chains. Many of my troubles are known to me as the ensnaring attempts of a wary and subtle enemy. He would stir up all the dormant, and rouse to greater vigour the already wakeful evils of my poor heart, and by some stratagem, despite every good impulse, press me down the way of the second and everlasting death. Many of his devices are as apparent to me as if they had taken shape in the light of day. I have been taught, too, that the blood and grace of Christ are abundantly sufficient for me. But my enemy has long been lulling me into slumbering lethargy—he has touched me with a wizard rod, and unresisting I

have become nerveless, bereft of strength and activity. Thus, while within there has existed some wish for worthy action, there has coëxisted the paralysis of native weaknesses and habitual transgressions known only to myself. I think I might be a profitable subject of dissection to those who have been searching into the theory of temptation. Up to this time *the cross* has lifted itself an impassable barrier to my progress; for, instead of hearty engagement in those active duties which stir up and strengthen gifts and claim larger measures of grace, I have chosen a post distant from the side of my Master, where I am scarce distinguished from the revilers and scoffers, and may more easily deny him. Such a course has brought barrenness and coldness upon my soul, and it would be just should God take from me the blessings bestowed and render them unavailing in my life. Duty is clearly revealed by the Spirit. The preaching of the gospel is that undertaking to which every holy influence calls my most assiduous and sincere attention—the labour of my future life. Conscious of this truth, I have placed some hindrances in the way of entrance into any other employment; gathered about me some agencies to push me onward in the performance of such high obligations; acknowledged my convictions to others; indeed, shut up the avenues of honourable retreat—and here I am brought right up to the mark. The Holy Spirit has enlightened

and convicted my conscience; influences around unite to urge me forth into the field of active service for the King of kings. He has brought me to this point of decision, and told me what choice will ensure life and happiness. He points to duty; and will he not, by the blast of his contempt, wither every fair hope of future triumph, every bright prospect of coming success, unless I obey his commandments? Will he not take from me the one talent already conferred, and transfer it to some more willing compeer?

“The world of human purpose is but a volume of evidence, attesting that it is easier to prate of right principles and raise glorious standards of action, than to bring the human heart to bow in submission to the truth. This record of convictions, also, will be unfelt, as a passing reverie, unless it develop to me more vividly my true state, and incite me to diligence that shall contrast with past disgrace.”

In somewhat of the same strain another record is made:—

“*February 3.*—There are times of despondency, when in the gayety and conviviality of a world the *soul* feels alone—alone in sadness, separate in its destitution of comfort—feeling as acutely as Schiller’s Exile:—

“‘Joy to everything beside,
Wo and ill myself betide.
Peace for me is—where? O, where?
In the grave—and only there.’”

“I rise from such solitariness with a deeper consciousness that the well-spring of happiness sends not forth its gushing, sparkling waters from my own nature; that this is the true experience when the spirit of man rests backward upon its own imagined sufficiency, and finds it vanity. Woful must be the condition of that lost being who shall look up from an eternal doom and behold no kindly hand to lift it from despair.

“The numerous promises and attempts to discharge duty that have proved failures and left me in the lurch—the earnest longings for a full tide of action to sweep over my soul that have been lulled into the indolence and slumber that rest on the summer lake—the firm resolves to do battle with my foes like a man armed *cap-à-pie* in divine power, that have given way to imbecility, and retreated from the vantage-ground I might have held for still more signal success against the enemy, all dispirit, and nearly sink me in despair. Even supposing life may be stretched to greater length, I feel that the hours of effort are stealing away. Youth, in its vigorous ambition and precursing eagerness, its brilliant hopes and gala joys, is fleeting like a shadow over the plain. The young plant refuses its nourishment and dwindles to a stunted growth, and there may be little expectation that the tree will shoot upward and spread out its branches as an abode for the fowls of the air. I have said

these scenes of thought discourage self-reliance, and sometimes direct to other more efficient incentives and capable assistances in our trial. But if we again and again resist these heavenly agencies, and restrain obedience to their commandment, will not this habitude and weakness fasten upon us like the grasp of a stronger than ourselves? O for power to do God's will!"

Again he writes:—

"*Tuesday, February 6.*—How many unwelcome experiences we have to endure before the proud self-willed heart will obey the truth! It evades its teachings by every flimsy excuse, until it is reduced to no choice, and compelled to admission even though too late for profit and reform. But this seldom comes to us here; we have time to do well if we would. The mind, too, is illumined and convinced; but the great subject of active duty requires all the persuasives we can bring to bear upon it. There is knowledge and light enough shed abroad upon the wastes of the human heart to make earth a heaven, if the great enginery in man's power could be brought into lively action. It is the instrumentality of God. This is the consideration of every one who looks on his race as one that may and must be raised from its degradation, who takes in with a glance the wants of man, and feels that *he* has a mighty and unanswerable part to play in this sacred drama. It is not till this stirring reality is brought home to

the heart that man can have clear views of duty.

“These things I have felt—and desired more extended love and more impelling feeling, that philanthropy which loses sight of self when coming in collision with any of the great doctrines of that scheme which reaches and raises the ends of the earth. But it is impossible that this goodly plant of brotherly love should thrive in a soil that is untilled. All these charities must flow out of such a self-love as has sought purification and cleansing from inbred defilement. And even in such a heart the effort may be fitful and flashing in the outset, and the youthful aspirant must struggle with and struggle on till his goodness, through the merits of Christ and the application of the Spirit, becomes a principle grounded, and resolute, and unswerving.

“O that I, weak, and wandering, and worthless as I am, might feel something of these divine influences! O that I might be rid of this binding and enslaving sluggishness, and contemplate myself as I shall in my responsibility and destiny when arraigned at the bar of final judgment!”

CHAPTER IV.

REMARKS ON HIS WRITINGS — JOURNAL — EXERCISES ON PREACHING — SUCCESSIVE ATTEMPTS TO PREACH — LICENSED BY THE QUARTERLY CONFERENCE — ADMISSION INTO THE NEW-YORK CONFERENCE — APPOINTMENT AT WESTVILLE AND BETHANY, CONN.

At the time of writing the above, and for some months subsequently, Stephen remained at home, devoting himself to study and preparation for the great work upon which he was about to enter. His mental conflicts, his religious experiences, convictions, and views upon different matters, were frequently committed to writing. They cannot properly be called a journal, but in truth just what they purport to be—a record of “heart and life.” These give a better account of his life, of his struggles with his own heart, of his several successive efforts to preach under the authority of the presiding elder, of his license by the quarterly conference, and his admission into the travelling connexion, than can be given by any one else. They furnish the best exhibition of his true character that can be given, because they were the secrets of his own heart, intended for no eye but his own. They are therefore given here consecutively, such only being omitted as would, in their publication, involve the slightest breach of delicacy.

It will be seen from these how honestly he

searched into the secrets of his own heart—how earnestly he strove to bring himself into a strict conformity with all the requisitions of that sacred word which he was called to proclaim.

The writer of this sketch makes it no part of his purpose to eulogize its subject. The only object he has in view is the comfort and gratification of a large circle of surviving friends; and still more the earnest hope that, in these records, whose merits can neither be enhanced nor depreciated by criticism, in the estimation of a judicious reader, enough may be found to encourage and strengthen the hearts of young Christians, especially of those who feel as he felt: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." Yet, while he has too much respect for the good sense of the reader to indulge in eulogy, or even in an expression of opinion upon the intrinsic merits of these transcripts of the inner life of their author, justice demands a few remarks to introduce them. Most of them—indeed, nearly all that he *ever* wrote—were written before his twenty-first year. They were written in private, and for private benefit. They were written evidently under the influence of present experience, and were never transcribed. In these circumstances, scarcely better evidence can be given of a well-regulated mind, a cultivated taste, and elegant scholarship, than the almost *total* absence of impropriety of expression and inaccu-

racies of style which characterize his manuscripts. In all that I have examined I find no word misspelled, not more than half a dozen omissions, and these of unimportant words, and less than that number of erasures and words interlined. This may be considered a small matter; but it speaks a great deal for the character of the writer, and shows how much (and how early in life) may be accomplished by care, and by cultivating the habit of always doing *well* whatever we undertake to do. There is one other feature of this journal which may be considered remarkable in one so young. This is the absence of egotism and personal incident. If an incident is mentioned in which the journalist was concerned, it is only as the basis of moral reflections, and as a key to closer self-examination. Taken, however, upon their simple merits, or as a truth-telling record of their author's life, during the short period that he continued the practice, they will repay the perusal. They are in a most intimate sense his *auto-biography*, the more strictly so because not so designed for the public.

“*Thursday, February 8.*—But I wonder that the noble example of Wesley and Morgan, and those independent seekers after truth at Oxford, has not been imitated among our young men. Might not an association of this character be substituted for the abundant secret clubs so generally formed, which are unnecessary, while

there are so many other means of purely literary improvement? The spiritual well-being of those diligent for religious truth might be incalculably advanced. It might be the occasion of reviving a more lively religious experience in the indifferent, lukewarm college-churches, and claim the constant revivifying descent of divine blessings. The W. U. has sent forth many sound scholars and useful men; but it ought to be a pillar of the American Methodist connexion in a sounder piety, and more flaming devotion to God. Our Church demands not so much *learned men* as it does *holy men*; but learning, when blessed and consecrated by such fervent aspirations for personal holiness and acquittal in the sight of God as dwelt in our honoured founder, when bringing all the trophies of its varied triumphs and laying them at the feet of our pure and simple Christianity, must 'spread its arms like seas abroad' to take in the fallen sons of a god-like race."

"*Saturday, February 10.*—Last evening I attended a social company . . . from which I could not retire till midnight, and I have not enjoyed a moment's sleep since. There is nothing to be said that can countervail the injurious and poisonous tendencies of these motley, flippant, and prolonged parties. They are either deadly to every religious feeling in those who mingle in the hilarity and partake of the sports, or they are irksome and painful to those who choose to be

singular among many for the sake of dear principles. . . . I never go to one of these assemblies without forsaking it dissatisfied."

"*Friday, February 23.*—Last evening the devil fairly outwitted me. From his attack it seems as though I should never recover, nor be able to discharge my duty as I might have done, had I not been led captive at his will. The appointment of the conference hastens on, and if I join the itinerant ranks, it becomes me to be more diligent. To this end father requested me to talk to the people last evening, and I consented. But as the hour for service approached, the cross was heavy, and I cried that the cup might pass from me, without much submission. Father mourned over my pusillanimity—and well he might. It seemed to me that God had forsaken me. My frame gave way; my heart sickened: to die seemed no greater trial than to attempt preaching in such circumstances. None can conceive my anguish of spirit.

"But I have sought in earnest prayer to my Lord and Saviour. He shows me that the cause was, not reposing my confidence in him. I had strengthened myself in my own wisdom, and in my preparation desired rather to please man than to gain the divine approval. I trusted to myself when the hour of test came; this support gave way like a broken reed, and I fell prostrate. The sense of the responsibility of the work rushed in like a full tide, and my own

inadequacy was not met by unwavering reliance upon God and the promise of his grace.

“This experience shows me one truth more forcibly than I ever saw it before—the necessity of entire dependence on God; it gives me to see that I am not wholly surrendered to his will, and therefore unfitted for its faithful performance; but it has begotten a resolution, in divine strength, to bear the cross.”

“*Wednesday, February 28.*—The need of deeper consecration is evident to me. God’s abounding grace has strengthened me to bear many crosses of late; but the corruptions of the heart will now and then manifest that *all* is not right within. It is a most comforting portion of our creed, that the grace of God may so renew the soul that, in all its desires and purposes, it may singly glorify him. Yet how seldom is this high Christian devotion attained, even by those who stand in the name of their Master to declare its privilege to others! If the spirit and energy of religion exist anywhere, it should be in the heart of the minister whom God has sent forth. And if I believe he has commanded me to this holy labour, does it not become me to search further into this mystery of godliness? O, it is my prayer four times a day, in the closet before God, that the mind that was in Christ may be found within me, and prepare me for his will and work.”

“*Monday, March 11.*—Within a few days I

have been enabled, by the grace of God, to step further into what I am fully convinced to be my duty, than ever before.

“Last Friday evening, by request of Rev. Brother Oakley, I tried to talk to the people in the name of God. But it was toil. The Spirit did not come to free me from the shackles of fear of man, and trust in myself.

“Yesterday I tried it again at Bedford-street, by request of Rev. Brother Cheeny. Here I enjoyed more freedom. But O, to address such a congregation! crowded to overflowing; yet they seemed attentive. The members of our little band were there, and I believe their fervent supplications were raised to heaven in my behalf. These are good brethren B——, B——, and G——, and I have taken sweet counsel with them, and we have helped each other on in the good, the best way. May they be preserved faithful unto the end!

“I do not feel discouraged by these efforts, feeble and failing as they are. No! I have undertaken to preach the gospel of Christ under too strong conviction of the solemn and imperative call of God, lightly to relinquish it. I know my ignorance—I feel my impotence. I realize the necessity of divine assistance. And man’s prescience is not so clear as to discern what God may accomplish through the feeble instrument entirely subjected to his will and purpose. He may make small things to show forth his great-

ness. But I must possess more resignation and likeness to Christ. How shall a man preach salvation till he be saved from the guilt and power of sin? How is he fitted to be the standard-bearer in the host of Immanuel, so long as one treasonable or undevoted desire remains within the breast? God of all grace, assist me to seek for transformation into the holy character of Christ, that, filled with his unrestrained love and zeal, I may be able to do good in my day and generation!"

"*Friday, March 15.*—Twenty-one years ago, this day, God breathed the breath of life into this lump of clay; then a very small one, compared with its present stature. This day finishes my legal minority, and ushers me more fully into the responsibilities of life. It is said it gives a man power over himself—where is it? God forbid it should be in disobeying his parents!

"I am led this day to look within and around me,—on the condition of my heart, on the prospects in this life, on the hopes for the life to come, when the interests of this shall close. But the past absorbs much reflection. It presents a woful catalogue of negligences, of weakness, of insensibility to the goodness of God and the means of improvement around me. Though almost impossible to drive out these horrid spectres of past folly, I would scan the present.

"Thank God, I am in the path of duty. I am pledged not only to God, but to my fellow-men,

to preach the riches of the gospel of Christ. The Church has not yet given her sanction; but if God shows his approval, and I am faithful, I anticipate no difficulty on this score. I feel that I am bearing God's message—that he has sent me on this errand. The path opened before me is one without ease or cessation, till I shall be able to say, 'I have finished my course.' God giving me strength, I will never relinquish the warfare till permitted to shout the victory and song of eternal hosanna.

"I have spared to me a father and mother, who have long been good and kind to me; sometimes, I think, too indulgent for my good. But it becomes me to render their setting hour joyful, as God shall give me ability. How shall I better honour them in their old age than by giving them to see that their only-surviving son, on whom many hopes depend, is endeavouring to be an humble, fervent servant of God, to devote his life in all its relations to the good of man, to lay up incorruptible treasures in heaven?

"I have beloved sisters. . . . Their fond love and anxious desires have clustered around me. Some of our number have gone to the world of spirits. Four little cherubs, before they knew sin, fled to the bosom of the Father above. One, in the pride of his manly strength, in the fulness of his unfolding hope and anticipations of usefulness, sank beneath the waters of the Atlantic. The coral-bed forms his couch,

and the green-waved deep his winding-sheet. But, though we mourn so much learning, and worth of heart, and rich promise, crushed by a mysterious dispensation, hope glances into the dark chambers of that mourning, and we trust to meet him in the world of brightness and bliss above. Before another year rolls around, some of us may be gone. It may be myself. O, how should we cultivate the most loving dispositions, the most endearing intercourses! We should be eager to aid, to cheer, and encourage, to sympathize with, and mutually strengthen each other.

. . . . Within the last year I have formed some pleasing acquaintances; but has my communion with others been circumspect, discreet, undefiled, adorning the doctrines of my Christian profession? Have I warned, pleaded with, exhorted my young companions to seek, first of all things, the kingdom of God and its righteousness? I fear not. God assist me to be more faithful. And this day it seems a duty to resolve to direct my conversation more entirely by the principles of the gospel. The devil has often insinuated himself into my heart in this unwariness. A word in season, how good is it! spoken in the name and for the glory of God!"

"*Monday, March 18.*—Yesterday afternoon I talked to the people, in the name of Christ, for about half an hour, at Second-street, the charge of my uncle Nathan. God blessed me. Several of my young acquaintances were there, as also

my sisters, of which I was unaware till after the services, or the cross might have seemed heavier.

“O, this is a great work! I sometimes feel it too great for me; but God, in his goodness, can increase my wisdom, and sustain me by his strength.”

“*Monday, March 25.*—One of the most arduous labours yet within my experience was attempted yesterday, in standing before the people in Forsyth-street Church, my father’s congregation. Nothing but the conviction of duty could have induced me to undertake it; and it was requested of me by those from whom I must, if at all, receive license to preach. In this spacious church it was especially difficult, because of the presence of such numbers of those with whom I had been familiar in Church-fellowship, and of some acquaintances, whose apparent duty was to criticise. But the Lord sustained me, removed to a great extent the fear of man, and I spoke with some liberty of spirit. I did not then know of a facetious announcement, made by father in the morning, that ‘they would be addressed in the afternoon by a young man whom they had never heard before, and it would depend on circumstances whether they ever heard him again!’”

“I cannot retreat from my position, though the cross grows so heavy. Placed in this city, and called on to receive permission to itinerate from this people, it becomes an unavoidable obligation to make known gifts and graces, if I

have any. But who can feel the burden of the task but him who is compelled to bear it? Gladly would I be in some retired spot, if I could be where the fear of man did not so shackle and restrain unfledged effort, and the strangeness of appearing before such large audiences did not communicate a feeling of misplacement of action. If where the results of effort might be more ostensible, and the singleness of aim at divine glory more unmixed, the heart might have more assurance and cheer. But, so long as God has commanded me to go into the harvest-work, what matters it so long as he is with me, and gives me the rich treasures of his love?—so long as his grace keeps me humble, and rids me of any seeking for the praise of man? Here is the point. O my soul, keep humble! Thou art surrounded by many who are ready to flatter and bestow favour, but by few ready and willing to tell the more truthful faultiness of thy juvenile attempts in so great a work! O that thou mayest feel, in every circumstance, thy utter dependence on the Power that is over all! This trial may be good.”

“*Wednesday, April 3.*—Last Sunday evening I gave a talk in Forsyth-street church. Hitherto I have spoken in the pulpit only by authority of the consent of the presiding elder, and invitation of preachers. On Monday evening, the leaders’ meeting of this station, (Forsyth-street,) after an examination of my reasons for belief that this is

the call of God, &c., recommended me to the quarterly conference for license to preach the gospel. Thus far have I proceeded in this great work. How great! I fear I do not realize its magnitude."

. . . "*Monday, April 15.*—Yesterday morning I spoke about an hour at the Madison-street Church; but I felt restrained, and I did not speak what I wished, nor as I wished. In the afternoon I went to Yorkville, and had much more liberty and power."

. . . "*Monday, April 22.*—Daily the absolute need of stricter and more uniform plans of study, of labour, of eating, of retiring to rest and awaking from it, of intercourse with others, and solitary meditation, of prayer and perusal of the sacred word, rises with greater importance and urgency. The labour, the responsibility of the work of a gospel preacher presses upon me with more and more mightiness. Shall I not shrink? No; thank God, he gives me strength to endure the trial; and as his light has been clear enough to show me my duty, so his grace will be strong enough to sustain me as the conflicts approach. How much need of humility, of holiness, of entire resignation, of ever-active zeal and awakened diligence!

"Study of the principles of the Discipline of our Church shows the demand for radical reform in very many things. So long as this discipline of spirit and conduct is imposed by the authori-

ties of the Church, it becomes us to obey it, and manifest a strict conformity thereto. The articles on fasting, on early rising, on spending morning and evening hours in exercises of devotion, are most judicious, but have been sadly neglected.

“This evening I have received from the quarterly conference license as a local preacher, and a recommendation to travel. What immensely great duties are now imposed upon me! God assist me by that grace without which my own impotence will only effect my own ruin, and the death of others!” . . .

“*Monday, May 6.*—I have frequently availed myself of an opportunity to attend the sessions of the General Conference, in the Greene-street Church.” . . .

“*Wednesday, May 15.*—I never before witnessed such a scene as transpired in the General Conference this morning. . . . By order of the Conference, from 12 to 1 o'clock all business of the day was suspended, and the body of delegates all joined in solemn and hearty prayer to the only Source of aid, for the aversion of the menacing danger to the union and harmony of Zion. Such a spectacle I have never before seen: these leading minds of this wide-spread Church, the aged servants of the cross, with heads blossoming for the tomb; the younger in the pride of their strength, from the extreme North, and South, and East, and West, of vari-

ous view and tempers, conjoined in devotion, and blending in humble supplication for divine light and guidance. To see great, noble men, thus struggling in child-like simplicity and faith, surrounded them with the highest dignity. Can these petty jealousies, these sectional prejudices, existing more in the fancy than anywhere else, and with which Methodist preachers have nothing to do, stand before such influences?"

* * * *

"*Friday, May 31.* . . . If the Holy Spirit shall bless this record of thought and feeling, of action and events, which I preserve for private inspection and reflection, will it not, by bringing life and passing time more sensibly before me, direct to self-examination, open unknown, though unpleasant realities, convince of frailty and impurity, and lead to the Fountain of all cleansing? God forbid this should be a vain employment!"

"*Wednesday, June 12.*—The New-York Annual Conference opens its session to-day. It may be that they will accept me, unworthy as I am, into the ranks of the itinerancy; if so, the question I would put to my heart is, *Are you ready?* I fear not. Not because I have not so many sermons sketched, or written, or stored in memory; not because I am unwilling to go to my work, for to that my mind has been determined according to the will of God; not because I am, in natural strength and acquired knowledge,

unprepared for the mighty contest; not because I shrink from leaving friends dear as the heart's blood:—but *that heart* is the stumbling block. It needs the winnowing and purging of divine grace. It needs a more entire and sacred reservation from all other designs, to the sole business of glorifying God, who has accomplished so great things in its behalf. Shall I not seek for this? There is but one way. God help me to come right!”

“*Saturday, June 15.*—Nothing during the few past days has tended to impart comfort and heavenly peace to my soul. . . . It seems as though the enemy of the Christian's peace improved every opportunity and adopted every insidious scheme to entrap and destroy me. At this critical moment, all these things come to weaken my faith, to cloud my view of the will of God concerning me, to quench that ardour which should be enkindled in the breast in prospect of so glorious a work. Under a sense of my failures and derelictions, it is my most sincere supplication that I may be able to renew my spiritual strength during the few remaining days.”

“*Friday, June 21.*—Many candidates, they say, and but few to gain admittance! Well, I am not disheartened, vexed, or anxious. I have put my case into the hands of Him who guides all things to correct issues. Surely it will not be matter for wonder if they refuse me. Little

am I capacitated to fulfil the arduous work of the ministry. But God is my witness that the motives which lead me forth to action are pure and devoted. The world undoubtedly would supply temporal comforts more fully than the Church, but the vineyard of the Lord is the field of my duty."

"*Tuesday, June 25.*—Yesterday, among others, I was received on trial in the New-York Conference. To-day the appointment for labour during the coming year was announced—" *Westville and Bethany.*" O, if I felt that this warfare is undertaken at my own charge, I should shrink! My mind has been clouded, my heart heavy. But this evening, at dusk, in fervent supplication at the throne of grace, the Lord manifested himself in melting my heart, in giving me trust in him. How great a work! How ill the qualification! Nothing but fire from heaven's altar, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, can render me adequate to the duty. To the source of all good, to the depository of all strength, I would come with my need. Human learning, the softness of a refined eloquence, can never accomplish this great work. It demands higher mysteries of knowledge; it demands the demonstration of the Spirit's power. My Master forbid—my dread account forbid—my influence over immortal souls forbid—that I undertake this cause from other motives than a settled evidence that my calling is divine—not

the patchwork of human ingenuity. Often I have difficulty to strip from my designs all panting after ambitious ends, all aspirations after human applause. But I believe my heart is fixed to overcome everything opposed to the true spirit of this holy work, through the sufficiency of divine assistance."

CHAPTER V.

BAND-MEETING — LETTERS — JOURNAL — LETTER FROM HIS
FATHER.

DURING his connexion with the membership of the Forsyth-street Church, he was associated with several young men of sterling worth and piety, in a band-meeting, to which allusions are several times made in the foregoing extracts. This association he remembered with great delight, as one from which he had derived much spiritual strength and comfort. With its members he continued to maintain the most friendly relations and correspondence, in which the great subjects of religion and the salvation of souls were always prominent. A short time previous to receiving his appointment from the conference, but after he was fully and practically committed to the work of the ministry, he thus writes to one of these chosen friends of the step he had taken, and the convictions which impelled him to it:—

. . . “The light of the Holy Spirit shone with such clearness upon my conscience, and Divine Providence pointed so unerringly to the way of my duty, that the conviction of obligation to God and man was resistless. With me it was not choice, it was compulsion: “Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel” was the

language of my heart. It was not so fully sanctified by heavenly grace as not to long for earthly distinction; its garlands looked fair and beautiful; its applause came up like sweet fragrance. But, while the world charmed, a voice within spoke its warning. I paused, and that pause has been my rescue. In choosing the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, my educational predilections, my growing love for its peculiar usages and institutions, my consciousness of its theatre for wide-reaching action, my numerous friendly associations in it, and a thousand influences constrain me to this course. Extemporaneous preaching, as patronized by our people, I have ever considered the medium of holy influence and greatest good to the hearts of the multitude of mankind. Itinerancy seems to me to approach nearest in likeness to the views and examples of the Saviour and his apostles, and *experience* has abundantly proved its infinite superiority to any other ecclesiastical arrangement. You know what power the more internal machinery, the class-meeting, the prayer-meeting, the love-feast, and other gracious means exert in binding to the Church of our choice the fondest and strongest feelings of our nature. I have chosen the life of a Methodist preacher, though one of toil and privation and constant sacrifice, because I love its proposals, because it brings me nearest the life of my Master." . . .

His first appointment from the bishop, as seen

above, was to Westville and Bethany. Here he seems to have had some discouragements and some opposition to encounter from the wicked of the outer world; but he found also comfort from the discharge of duty. Faithful and earnest in his efforts to meet all the claims arising from his pastoral relation to the people, he secured their confidence and esteem, and his best reward in feeling that his labours were blessed to them. To what extent the seed sown by him in a soil then barren and almost untilled have since, or shall hereafter, spring up and grow into harvest will be known only in the great day of accounts. The influence of a good man is never lost; and the word spoken in faith, with an humble confidence in God to give it efficiency, like the pebble cast into the sea, is shoreless in its multiplied vibrations.

In a letter to one of his friends in New-York he writes:—

“The work in which I am engaged, and to which I endeavour to devote soul and body, keeps me generally in a state of good feeling. God has blessed me much since I have been here, and given me to know that *he* has sent me on this errand of mercy. The people come out to hear, and I trust some good is done in the name of Christ.”

At another time he writes to the same friend:
“Besides many personal friendships formed during my residence in Forsyth-street,

I find that some religious associations cling to me with great tenacity. There is a regard toward the church of my espousals to Christ which I can exercise toward no other house of God. O how many precious, happy seasons did I enjoy there from the time that my freed spirit embraced the liberty of the gospel until, in obedience to the call of Heaven, I went forth to spread the savour of a Redeemer's name! Their memory is sweet. Often I live them over again. That worship of our band-meeting, so unworthy in endeavour, yet so blessed in our weakness! Do you not think that small meeting of honest, confiding hearts, in earnest prayer to God, often fanned the spark of grace that might have expired? Every one who met with us there will always have a living and loved place in my heart. That good band of Christian soldiers that used to meet us in the class-room to burnish their arms, and talk of conflict and anticipate victory—all of these I remember with inexpressible Christian regard. What a sweet token of love to God and pardon through the Saviour is this love to our brethren! . . . This is a good service, and gives good reward. But O, how feebly am I prepared for it! How weakly do I labour in it! Yet, glory be given to God that I am anywhere in the ranks! I wish myself foremost, though the most exposed and dangerous spot. What if we fall, if we are at the post? I feel grateful to the grace of God that I

have grown any in spiritual stature since I left you; but I fear I am the weakest, most unworthy of servants in this cause."

These extracts show how thoroughly duty and religion were uppermost in all his thoughts, and how strong an influence they had upon all his personal relations. His charity was enlarged, his friendships cemented, his ambition subdued, his affections chastened and purified.

The journal, which had been omitted for some time, was resumed:—

"*Thursday, September 19.*—My journalizing was discontinued immediately after my reception into the New-York Annual Conference; but the usefulness, and apparent need of the practice, in gathering scraps of experience, and memorials of the past, have been presented with new force, and I resume it, praying for divine blessing upon this endeavour toward improvement of mind and heart. . . .

"O, how my heart was blessed last evening in prayer-meeting! It seemed as if the baptismal fire caught and melted every soul. The wicked prowled around with some disturbance, and even entered into the assembly of God's saints, in folly and trifling. The Spirit may yet seize some heart in an unwary moment. We have covenanted to pray anew for the revival of pure and undefiled religion."

"*Saturday, September 21.* . . . Is there not too much sloth? Bethany must have an

arousal. We have our contest—a common foe. The week closes; the Sabbath is nigh. Lord, let it be a great day to-morrow! O for one sinner converted from the error of his way!”

* * * *

“*Thursday, October 24.*—Last evening met the class at brother D——’s. Tuesday evening, attended a love-feast at Fair Haven; and it was most truly a spiritual feast. There were present five preachers, together with brethren from the Churches in New-Haven, and friends from various parts. The shouting was loud and strong, but hearty and spiritual. Such singing! such testimonies of the power of grace! How good to hear the veterans of the cross recount their toil and battle, and shout anew the sound of victory, as in youth! My father was talking of his happiness in meeting again those who had laboured and prayed with him in years gone by, and whom he yet loved; but how much higher the rapture to greet friends when we meet on the blest shore of deliverance! Then will there be some sweet remembrances of having been a faithful itinerant Methodist preacher.”

“*Saturday, October 26.*—Another week draws to its close. How has it been spent? Too much wasted. The swiftness and unconsciousness with which days and weeks come around to me, make me wonder that my precious privileges are so poorly improved; not only in mental application, but in communion with the Father of spirits,

and acquirement of holy graces. My heart and life need revival and reform. I must rise earlier. I must be more regular and unbending in my mental and physical habits. The neglect of one duty opens the door of escape from the discharge of another. Both personally and relatively, to my charge, there must be deep and earnest change."

"*Thursday, November 7.* . . . I have lately received a letter (dated October 31) from father, which I copy *verbatim*, as of too much value to be lost :

" 'MY DEAR BOY,—You may judge how deep an interest I feel in your welfare, in your health of body and soul, as well as your success in the great work to which you believe the Holy Ghost has called you. I am now growing old, and you are my only son living,—the only earthly prop and support of my house. I shall soon be gone. May God spare you long, and make you more eminently *holy* and *useful* than ever I have been. In looking back, I see a thousand imperfections in myself which I mourn over, yet cannot now alter. When I first started in the ministry I lacked everything but a sincere heart to please God ; and I have had but few helps, and few to give me instruction. What little I have learned, I have had to dig it out myself. It is otherwise with you. I determined, from the first, that my children should have a chance for an education.

You have the *foundation laid* for a good education. You have been required to do little but study, all your days. In this you begin with advantages I had not, and which many others have not; but all this will profit you not, unless you *faithfully* and constantly improve upon it. Allow me, then, to give you a few plain directions as tokens of my love.

“1. Take care of your health, which has become rather delicate, but may be improved by care. Walking is a healthy exercise; but don't walk too fast, so as to get out of breath; and be careful and not sit in the open window, or a draught of air, when you are warm and in a perspiration. Keep your feet dry. Never sleep in damp sheets. Be as regular as possible in retiring and rising; rise early; throw up your window, and air your room and bed, as soon as you rise. Keep everything in your room *nice*, and in its proper place,—towel, wash-bowl, &c. Few persons know or care anything about regularity: but an educated man should be different; he should both know and care. Therefore you must fix your own plan, and follow it, without any regard to what others do, or say, or think. Don't study too long at a time: take a respite—a walk—make a visit—then resume your studies. Don't lean over too much when you read or write; this injures the lungs. Learn to sit upright; in walking stand up straight. In public speaking and praying use great care; your

health and life may depend on this. Be careful, then, and don't speak or pray too long, or too loud. It is the abuse, not the proper use, of the lungs that hurts them; you may preach three times a-day, and pray a dozen, and not hurt you as much as one unnatural effort. In speaking be *natural*, easy,—just as you are in common conversation. Let the voice play easily; don't make your periods too long, so as to hurt your breathing. Not giving time to breathe has hurt many a public speaker. So, in prayer, don't keep too long on one key; learn to raise and let fall your voice easily, and at your pleasure. Never *commence* on too high a key; give room to rise or fall as you progress in your subject; endeavour to be self-possessed; don't get in a hurry; don't fear a failure. Do the best you can, and leave all to God. Sometimes adopt the colloquial plan of speaking.

“2. As to your studies, I hardly feel myself competent to give advice; you know much more about them perhaps than I do. But allow me to suggest that you have a *fixed time* for each; say such an hour in the morning for reading the Bible, with notes,—read your Greek Testament, and why cannot you learn Hebrew?—such an hour for reviewing your classical studies,—don't neglect these,—both Latin and Greek; such an hour for reading history, &c. Write down what occurs to your mind on every book. Write short sermons, without reference to preaching them.

Write something every day. Keep one thing or another on the anvil continually; this keeps the mind in a healthy state, and prevents dissipation.

“3. In preaching, depend on God. Write, read, think; but *depend* on none of these. Throw your whole soul on the Lord Jesus Christ; look for his immediate influence. You are in his work: you have been called by him to this work; he has promised to be with you in it; you have a right, therefore, to expect his direct inspiration when you go to the people in his name. The Holy Ghost will aid your thoughts, and feelings, and delivery; he will give you power. Don't be afraid of losing the thread of your discourse, if you should sometimes be drawn out of your proposed track, to throw in an exhortation, a reproof, a warning, a prayer. Generally close with a pointed application. Grow warm, and strong, and pointed, as you progress. I dislike very much to hear a preacher begin as though he were about to do something wonderful, and finish in a tame, cold, uninteresting manner. Let the weakest part of a sermon (if it have any, and generally it will have) be in the middle. Avoid too long introductions; if you have one at all, (which is not always necessary,) let it be short, and just open the matter in hand. I have heard some preachers begin a sermon with a long introduction, in which they brought in about all they had to say in the body of their discourse, so that the sermon was little more than

tautology. This is sure to weary the audience, and destroy the good effect of their preaching. Long sermons, unless on extraordinary occasions, or special subjects, are not generally profitable; from thirty to forty-five minutes would probably be a good average length.

“4. Your personal piety. May I say a word here too? In this day of general lukewarmness this may be of vast importance; indeed, it always must be. It is hard work for a man to preach to others what he does not feel himself. His preaching should flow out of his own heart, as a stream from its fountain. Keep, then, your heart right with God. Be much on your knees in the closet. Pour out your soul in prayer for entire holiness, for a complete consecration of every power and faculty of body and soul to his will. Those who pray most in secret, who live in deepest communion with God, who have most of the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, generally preach the best, and do most good. Remember, it is by faith we live. We cannot make too much of the blood of Jesus; we need it every moment to cleanse and keep us clean. Faith apprehends this—appropriates this: faith sees, lives on it. We are poor sinners, weak, miserable—what can we do without the constant sprinkling of this blood?

“5. As to your practice, I need say but little. You know how a Christian ought to live. Be cheerful, but not light and trifling. This would

spoil all you do. Be religiously sober. converse with every one you are in company with, on the subject of religion. Never engage in politics; leave them to the men of the world. Visit from house to house; some every day, except Sunday. Pray, when you may, with those you visit. Never stay long in a place; short visits. Notice the children, and talk with them. Visit the schools on your circuit; often visit your own Sabbath schools. Recommend your people to read; encourage learning. See that every Methodist family has a Discipline, and if possible, Wesley's Sermons, and a commentary of some kind. Discourage the *love* of money. Look after the poor, and lambs of the flock; this will make them love you, and open the way to their hearts, that you may do them good.

“O, in a word, give yourself wholly to your work! Keep your eye single, that your whole soul and body may be full of light. God's glory, the honour of Jesus Christ, and the salvation of souls, should be your only object; and if you get less of this world's goods, less money, less ease, less honour in the world, you will get the more in the world to come. Should your Lord and Master say in the last great day, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” it will be an eternal weight of glory. May God bless and prosper you, my dear Stephen, and may the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always. Amen.

“Your affectionate father, H. BANGS.”

The above is a plain letter, full of practical and useful advice, from an affectionate father, an aged minister, to a dutiful son, who had just entered upon his calling. The filial duty of that son, and the respect felt by him for the advice of a father who enjoyed his fullest confidence and warmest love, prompted him to transcribe it, not as a mere memorial, but as a chapter of useful lessons to which he might refer, and from which he might derive both instruction and encouragement. We leave the father's letter where the son placed it, hoping that although he upon whom so many hopes were concentrated was not permitted long to practise its precepts, it may yet prove useful to many a young soldier who has cause to bless the instrumentality of its venerable author.

Besides its intrinsic worth, this letter was valuable to Stephen because of its sacred relations. There are other considerations by which it commends itself to young ministers. In the first place, it was written in circumstances, and dictated by feelings which, if any, demanded the utmost candour. Again, it demands consideration from the great experience of the writer. Moreover, the advice given is plain, practical, and pointed, such as can be found nowhere in the writings of those who make books, for whatever ostensible object, who write for literary reputation, for the praise of men. How much more genuine worth should we find, and how

vastly more of good would be accomplished by human instrumentality, if with the sternness of discipline necessary to the child, be coupled the prudence and forbearance, the amiability of temper, and correctness of example, which at the same time secures his confidence, and wins his affections!

CHAPTER VI.

JOURNAL — PREPARATION FOR THE PULPIT — PERUSAL OF FICTITIOUS WORKS — FEMALE BEAUTY — LITTLE THINGS — FILIAL GRATITUDE — INFLUENCE OF GREAT MINDS — BIRTHDAY REFLECTIONS — CLOSE OF HIS LABOURS AT WESTVILLE AND BETHANY — APPOINTMENT TO MILFORD, CONN. — REFLECTIONS.

His journal thus continues. Under date of Wednesday, January 1, 1845, he observes:—

“This is the opening day of the new year. Last night we held a good watch-night, although ungodly sinners would not heed the invitations of mercy. I have now dedicated myself anew to Christ. The past year has been too full of sloth and neglect; but it is necessary for me to start anew, to amend my ways, to seek higher holiness, to be more faithful to my charge in rightly dividing the truth, and visiting in person. O, I would I could retrieve the past, but it is gone; and now I would surrender soul and body to the Lord.”

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“*Tuesday, January 21.*—On Sunday afternoon I preached on occasion of the death of Mr. C—— C——. As he was unconverted, I employed the solemn stroke as a warning. This week we have begun to seek for more religion in the Church of God, and for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In order to this we hold prayer-

meetings in the evening at private houses. Last evening the first meeting showed that the Lord was on the giving hand: the friends filled brother S——'s room, and the power of God was with us. May this be the beginning of better days in Westville! O, I need more of the pure spirit of my Master! I do love to exhort sinners to flee from the wrath to come. I do love to pray, and though I cannot sing, I can now and then shout; but O, for more power with God."

..... "Tuesday, February 11. . . . In my preparation for the pulpit, I often have some difficulty in selecting that mode which may be best pleasing to God, adapted to do good, and worthy of the cause I plead. My extemporaneous gifts are not very great, and patient study alone can make me successful. Under the weight of this conviction, it has been forced upon me that I ought to be more laborious *before* I go before the congregation. Is it not a false devotion, a wandering and unwarranted trust upon supernatural influences, that lead men so designedly to stand before the people with an unpremeditated and undigested form of speech? Our dependence surely should be on the Spirit of God, both in the delivery and in the enforcement of truth; but must we, therefore, neglect all those secondary means which the Spirit has so often blest and which a kind Benefactor has bestowed for wise purposes?

There are occasions when the Holy Spirit, in its powerful impulse, bears the man beyond the region of his own unaided capacity, and he wings his way to spiritual heights untrod by mere human understanding: but does not God call upon us to bring all our powers and consecrate them to his service? If one man is peculiarly gifted in the use of the pen, may he not bring that to his aid in the public ministration? If one is endowed with those faculties of concentrating and expressive power which make the rapid and accurate thinker, may he not avail himself of these helps in extemporaneous speech? But the preacher should not be so trammelled by prepared discourse that no advantage can be taken of thoughts suggested by the circumstances of the moment; yet, conscious of the greatness of the truths he brings, he must think much, study much, pray much, use the privileges within reach.

“Summerfield advised to write a good deal, but not on the subject projected for the pulpit. Some of his sketches are excellent; but the living man, we are told, excelled them all. Yet, can the laws which directed such master minds as Summerfield and Fisk, whom nature almost placed without conventional regulations, always apply to weaker and less ready intellects? Some write no more than three or four chief points of remark; this is father’s general custom. Some have difficulty in arranging thoughts finely with-

out pen in hand ; this is Dr. Olin's case. There is much in habit. We cannot always make good laws for others, nor always bring others to our standard and mode of action. Nor is this attempt wise. It seems absolutely necessary, if I do justice to the subject, or the people, or myself, that I spend some time in preparation. A natural want of instantaneous language has compelled me to some course of memorandum, although I never take any to use in the pulpit. I hope the Spirit will guide me in the way of truth !”

Here follow, consecutively, entries in the journal in which the writer has gone away from his personal experience, and made a record of his reflections upon different subjects. Though occupying a place under their several dates in his journal, they are indeed essays upon the topics with which his mind seems to have been engaged at the time. They not only contain many sound reflections and striking thoughts, but partake in style of the ease and simplicity which naturally characterize the communings of the mind with itself. In their place they furnish almost a model in style of composition of its kind. They moreover beautifully and forcibly exemplify a purity of heart, a refinement of feeling, and an elevated Christian character which excluded even from his most secret meditations every gross and grovelling sentiment, and the indulgence of every thought and every impulse that was in

consistent with his sacred calling. Again, they illustrate his character in some important respects more clearly than any biographer can portray it. The exterior man—the man in his intercourse with the world—is often masked. To the eyes of men he may personify the social and Christian virtues, while the inner man shrinks not only from the gaze of others, but dares not even venture upon the work of self-examination. It is frequently the case that men who write for the edification and entertainment of the public, or for glory while they live, and a name among men when they die, give forth precepts and avow principles to which their character and practice are a living lie. These articles, on the contrary, seem to be a veritable transcript of the opinions and emotions of one who had laboured for a conscience void of offence, a heart pure before God.

● Writing seems to have been with him a favourite amusement; yet in all that has been found of the productions of his pen, he never once descends to trifling, nor loses sight of the importance of making every mental exercise tributary to the formation of a pure and exalted Christian character, and to such a development of natural endowments as would fit him for the most extended usefulness.

“*Tuesday, February 20.*—I can easily recall the many hours I have spent in the perusal of light fictitious works called novels; but only in

thought. To me, even now, the reading of a novel is what the first glass is to the reformed drunkard. But I have dared, within the present week, to allow the attractiveness of 'Rose D'Albret,' by James, to draw me from my usual course of reading. There is something in the exquisite description, in the ingeniousness of the plot, throughout the works of this author, which has often delighted me. He dwells chiefly among the scenes of the Middle Ages, and interweaving the customs, and facts, and characters of those strange eras, his magic mind touches many a chord with skill. Notwithstanding they are denounced as dark, and superstitious, and barbarous, there yet remains something in the human breast which answers to the story of romance, and danger, and chivalry. The youth can scarcely ponder these tales of yore without buckling on his armour, mounting his charger, and going forth to do battle for some fair dame. But things and men have changed, and women too. The customs of a semi-civilized age have given way; light has poured in upon the mind which has been elevated to more spiritual pursuits. If we search diligently and candidly for the influences that have so wonderfully transformed the face of Europe and America, we find them to have been evolved from the pure and disencumbered doctrines of Christianity. A new kind of nobility has been introduced—not of wealth, nor beauty, nor power; but a nobility

in morality. A freshly-developed standard of greatness is pushing its way, and swaying the views of the world. The chivalry of modern nobility consists in the exercise of benevolence; its codes of honour, and principles of action are not limited to the relations of this life. Man has come to see himself worthy of a nobler struggle than fighting for a lady's glove.

"This principle of nobility is a spiritual creation, and beautiful to him who can look on it with a spiritual eye. The faith is gaining ground, that nothing but influence from Heaven can direct the soul of man to what is really noble and good. Yet human invention devises plans wherewith it hopes to exalt itself above its degradation, and cover its real unworthiness with the gossamer-veil of its own conceit. Man strives in a thousand ways to elevate his thoughts and desires, or rather to raise the opinions of others concerning his own character and merit. Often he surrounds himself with the pomp and glitter of parade, extends and mystifies his name with titled would-be advertisements of transcending excellency; often he tricks out the perishing dust of his earthly nature with the fantasies of art, valueless as they are numberless.

"We look with admiration at the bright qualities displayed by many of the chivalric heroes, but with pity at their false honour and misdirected effort. It must be the rejoicing of every heart struggling for goodness, to see one endeavor

ouring to ennoble his heart and nature. It is the duty of every man to use the means within his reach to unfold and beautify every part of his being and character. He has a body, and the goodness of God has commended it to his care and culture; and he who regards his intellect alone, and trains and strengthens that, while he permits his body to languish prematurely, must, to some extent, fail in the objects of his existence. The principle must be acknowledged concerning any portion of our mysteriously conjoined frame-work; but though not infidelic in theory, our conduct is very discordant. Personal appearance is a thing worthy of consideration, and often is the means of performing much that is good. Every one has peculiar inborn taste and bending, and so far as a man violates no principle of rectitude palpable to his understanding, we should yield suffrage to peculiarity of notion. The slightest bestowals of a kind Being are not to be despised; and, so far as consistent with truth, every one should improve in his bodily constitution, that which may be developed into what is truly dignified and ennobling, and conducive to genial influence among his fellow-men. These principles appertain also to his intellect and his heart.

“But while man’s moral perceptions have been illuminated, and the higher aims of his existence pointed out, one principle must exercise controlling sway in his efforts toward self-cul-

ture, one delightful energy must leaven the whole body of his exertion. It is the faith of the Christian regenerating the heart, and converting the hopes and aims of man from earth heavenward. There is nothing concealed in this faith which can conflict with anything tending to the development and enlargement of the man, unless it be his growth in vice. It *makes* all the desires pure, all the actions simple; and without it, there is nothing gloriously noble. After the wonders of the human frame, after the splendour of the highest intellect, the true nobility and grandeur of man is unreached and unseen. The Amazonian and Patagonian may be specimens of nobility—Voltaire, and Hume, and Gibbon, may be instances of nobility—but, with the gigantic body, and the capacious mind, something yet is wanted to restore the image of God. That something is all-needful. It is reserved for such characters as David, Luther, Wesley, Washington, and the like, to exhibit to some extent patterns for the aspirant after nobility. Divine grace is infused into that which is human, to exalt it to the likeness of the Incarnated Deity. These men did not attain the limit, for all had foibles; but they possessed the elements, they grasped the conception, they embodied it in their lives. We have the benefit of their labour; we look at their attainments, and may even surpass them.

“It is necessary that we seek a beautiful un-

folding of the whole man, while the moral sits enthroned over all. This will elevate the character into nobleness; this shades the false display and trumpeted honours of privileged aristocracy, and makes the most humble exalted; this lifts to the gaze of the world a motto that should win esteem, and place, and honour,—moral worth."

"*February 25.* . . . Some seem to be more susceptible than others to female beauty and attraction. . . . How often are notions of the showy characteristics of woman erroneous! Mrs. Ellis remarks, in view of the perishability of 'beauty,' and its evil influence on the heart of the possessor, that 'we should rather be inclined to consider it a bane than a blessing to the human race.' This may depend somewhat on our judgment of the constitution of human beauty. To those who look on features as organs of a soul within, physical formation may be a grave matter. It is not the regularity of this dusty fabric's make which contains the element and enduring principle of beauty, in the high sense in which the transcendent glory of a human countenance should be felt to consist. There is pleasure in gazing at a well-formed face, at the delicacy and refinement of person, nature aided by art may have conferred; but so is the delight enjoyed in tracing a meteor. There may be a regular contour of the countenance, a well-built and easy carriage of body, and all the appurte-

nances of a beautiful frame-work ; yet, though it may be a brilliant casket, it may be destitute of that beauty which is given to woman as her high and honourable adornment. The body has become the cage of the soul, but it is likewise its instrument. Confined for a life-time within these earthly walls, the soul yet makes them its great house of enginery, and the organs of its power and will. The mysterious biunion has been designed that the one may operate by means of the other, and the body is thus a blessing. It is senseless matter and corruption without the soul, and it is of little account to us but as it is the home and instrument of action to its nobler companion ; and in our associations with others, the soul is the object of dealing and communion. There must, then, be some comparative estimation to be given to the beauty of the one and the beauty of the other.

“Some countenances I have seen fashioned after the exquisite Lucian model, mounted on a figure that might have tempted the grasping ambition of the old statuaries, yet it seemed a thing of wax, instead of life and soul. Again, I have seen some, perhaps not so exactly chiselled, yet excelling the imagination of Chantry, for the soul was speaking through the body its living, ever-varying voice. Did the thought and feeling pervade the soul ? it suffused the countenance. Did the passionate enthusiasm fire the spirit ? it

lit the eye and wreathed the cheek. The body was the mirror of the living principle within, and that expression of the soul's thoughts, and feelings, and wishes, must exceed the most finished specimen of the wax-like beauty of the form. This is the highest ideal of beauty; it finds its seat, as well as its sympathy, in the soul. To me it seems that there is no real excellency in the female countenance, except it utters the sentiment and character of the inwardly beautiful and spiritually pure. This introduces into the estimate of beauty an important consideration. If the real constituent beauty of the female person be hid in its higher and nobler companion, the necessity of the existence of that noble nature is presupposed. There is no heart so depraved by original corruption, so evil in tendency, and prone to the path which must lead to all that is degraded and disfigured, as to be unable to exalt and beautify itself through the means offered by Infinite Wisdom and Grace. Cultivation is as necessary for the hundred-fold produce of the soul, as for the soil of the earth. By it the one is decked with flowers, and blooming fields, and luxuriant gardens; by it the other is made the paradise of all that is lovely and heaven-born. As the expression of a high intellect, and the stamp of a lofty soul, from the noblest order of beauty, nature, in what is called genius, performs a great part in conferring this inestimable gift. Her (might it not better be

said to be the work of God?) aid is quite necessary in this department of beauty. But application to books, and the products of other minds, as well as the constant study of nature all around us, has a wonderful degree of influence in imparting that attractive and delightful intelligence to the countenance which is one of the highest ornaments of woman. Still, this class of beauty is not so frequent nor so necessary in her as in her sterner partner. It is in the expression of the sensibilities that the power of female beauty lies. Nor is anything more distinguishable. A person of accurate observation and ready apprehension may easily detect the character of a woman's heart. How absolutely requisite, then, that this heart be pure, and unsinning, as its Maker intended! A great American once said, 'Man is a religious animal.' There is nothing within him, nothing in his connexions, aloof from his religious nature and religious necessity. So here, short of piety, the true and heartfelt spirit of Christianity, nothing can communicate the holy aspiration, the angelic meekness and purity, the constant and devoted sincerity which are lustrous in the crown of woman's virtues; they find a home and fitting growth only in the heart whose trust and aim is Christian.

"May we not place herein the standard of female beauty? It is lofty, perhaps seldom reached; we hope not. There is but fading beauty in the most perfectly-formed countenance unless

it image such a soul as described. Then, this simple beauty when least adorned by the trinkets of art, 'is adorned the most.' Then, it needs not the tinsel and vain show so often employed to set-off its worth and enchanting power. Then the 'music breathing from the face' resembles not some little ditty of sentimental love under the window in a dark night; but its full-toned breathing exalts the soul of the man, as he admires, to conceptions almost above himself, and to actions of great emprise; or, like the strain of a distant melody in the hush of evening, it wraps the spirit in a magic mantle, lifting it from earth to heaven, and from communion with evil to that which is good and heavenly.

"Thus, quite an 'essay' has been expended on this topic. It is useless for any one to deny that female beauty has charms over the man.

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"Shall I tear the above pages away? No; I will let them rest: my opinions may change after more thorough acquaintance with the world."

"*Thursday, February 27.* . . . I remember to have heard a college classmate, of acknowledged ability, deliver his chapel-speech from the text, 'Covey, who are you?' Once, while walking through the principal street of the little city of M——, indulging in the high-floating speculations of the youthful intellect entering upon the mysteries of knowledge, a

little ragged urchin cried out from the gutter, 'Covey, who are you?' What influence this touching exclamation may exert upon the young man's life, I know not; but from it he delivered a most eloquent and interesting address on the vanity and falsity of human pride. It then struck me how many noble lessons in morals may be learned from the minutiae of every-day transactions, how many momentous sentiments may be elicited from trifling occasions, how many grand efforts may be roused by insignificant circumstances! The great is formed by combination of the small, both in character and achievement. It is true of the whole universe of things, that it is a great sum in Addition, which, though simple, the stretch of mathematical investigation has not reached. Thought is awakened to action variously, and suggestion is brought to operate under very different circumstances. But it is seldom that the newest and most valuable reflection is induced by the most imposing event. The man who is the most accurate thinker lights the train of his research; not by some great and glaring conflagration, but by some hidden, unnoticed spark. The minute incident furnishes a key to the opening of the most valuable treasure-houses. Wherever the man of observant thought goes, he is not seen to be the heedless, lounging stroller, but the watching and apprehensive critic. A leaf unfolds to him the most beautiful regularities of nature; a stone is the index of the great

strata of the earth; a cloud is the wonder of a romance; a look is a volume of human purpose; the slightest token of sympathy awakes the eloquent harmonies of passion's lyre. The philosopher meditates upon the enigma of material governance, and his profound reverie is broken by the fall of an apple before him—suddenly the little monosyllable *why* rises, and conducts him to the most useful and brilliant discoveries.

“Diligent attention to the little in the mental world is absolutely necessary to great intellectual attainment. How useful are *little things*!

“Little things!—what would we be without them? If we had always to cope with the mighty and struggle for the great, how soon our wearied faculties must tire! In order to fulfil duty, and pursue a happy and prosperous career, strict attention to the little in all our relations must be the employment of an active mind. Thus only will we have a constant, delightful flow of pleasant and profitable thought; thus only will we be able to participate in the thousand blessings strewn in our pathway, or discharge those weighty obligations involved in connexion with other immortal beings. It applies not only to great and dignified situations, but reaches especially to the social and domestic circles of life.

“Little things counted into a man's reputation, often outweigh larger standards of judgment. It is by care for little things that

we acquire concern for great things. There is no doubt but one hundred pennies make a dollar; and many little actions not so regularly coined make the sum of human life. The shrewd remark of Benjamin Franklin—‘Take care of the cents and the dollars will take care of themselves,’ may be applied to other things than financial economy. It is by seizing upon the suggestion of a writer and employing it as the theme for a course of individual meditation, that we arrive at what may gratify and enrich the intellect. It is by heeding the little things in our relations with men, and honorably using them to our advantage that we may erect a praiseworthy reputation. It is by attention to the little things of our inner life that domestic harmony allures us to the joyful fireside, and the strength of confiding, undissembled affection, binds us to our home. It is by a mind regardless for this that the beauties of nature are enjoyed, and its lessons of wisdom and satisfaction understood. It is by this spirit that evil is shunned, and the heart perfected in those virtues which create the highest object of moral admiration.

“These principles are too frequently and forcibly proved by experience to admit of hesitancy as to their truth; but why does the heart hesitate so strenuously to obey? When I look over the dismal pages of my private life, the tardy improvement of mind, the recklessness in the all-

important matters of religious experience and duty, the great failure lies in disregard of little things. Little temptations and little delays are dangerous. Little duties must be faithfully discharged."

"*Friday, February 28.*—This is the last day of winter; but the mild, sunny weather of a few days past has little seemed like winter; the blue-bird is seen and heard around the fences and trees.

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"But here, during the year that is now nearly gone, how often have I thought over the past, the far past, the past that never can be brought to me again till I meet it at the bar of God! Just now I thought of those dear sisters . . . of those parents who have for years cherished me and endured my silly conduct; of that blessed home, for which I shall thank God forever. O, if any one may have reason to be grateful for kind and pious parents, it must be myself! This natural heart was very wicked. When I glance at the doings of my younger days, when the dispositions of the heart began to display themselves, to open their existence to the fostering and strengthening, or the opposing and crushing influences around, the darkness and depravity of my heart, which might have been the incipency of a subsequent career of crime and dishonour, startle me, and make me fall on my knees in gratitude to God for such

wise and good parents. They showed me my erring views, my daring sins; by chastisement and entreaty they kept in check my evil propensities till the grace of God subdued me. Ought I not to give them the service of my life, while I cherish them in my heart? I pray for strength and means to render their last days peaceful and comfortable, so far as this world is concerned; and give them pleasure in seeing their only son walking in the admonitions of the Lord, and striving to benefit his race.

“This holy service is not only imposed by the teachings of nature, but the command of God, through his servant, the apostle Paul: ‘Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.’ And shall we forget this remarkable injunction when out of our legal minority? Is the moral bond weakened? The mind of man always errs when it disagrees with Bible wisdom. Its decision is the standard and test of all philosophy. ‘*Honour* thy father and mother’ is the word of command, and circumstances can never change the duties thus imposed. ‘That it may be well with thee;’ for whoever violates the injunction bears upon him the weight of God’s curse; and, surely as truth cannot prove false to itself, evil lurks beneath his footstep. The observer of the end of youth will see that these principles do not fail in their application. There

seems to be no sin which more faithfully meets the frown of Heaven in the events of this life than filial disobedience and rebellion.

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“It is asserted that dereliction from this sacred obligation stains the character of the youth of this age; but God forbid that such unpardonable hostility to the divine word, and the voice of the inward monitor, should belong to the generation just rising to power and rule! I trust that by far most of the youth yield honourable submission to the command of the apostle. Can there be anything sweeter? There is no more beautiful spot, no brighter relic of bliss, than the happy domestic circle. It cannot exist without filial virtue; with it, home is a garden of beauty, and the atmosphere is filled with the most delicious fragrance. No wonder if such entertainment should have the company of angels unawares!

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“The wizard hand that struck enchantingly the ‘Harp of the North,’ called up beautiful symphonies in the heart, when it sung:—

‘Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than heaven;
And if there be a human tear
From passion’s dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek,
It would not stain an angel’s cheek,
’Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter’s head!’

Joyful tear! There are many daughters, who, as the graceful Ellen to her hero-father's welcome return, bring joy to a parent's heart, 'like a sun-beam swift and bright.' This filial affection fosters in the youthful breast veneration for its higher duties, and reverence for the authority that is over all.

"I have strayed from personal experience into a delightful field. And why may I not, now and then, put down something besides record of facts?—where there is so little to be noticed."

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"*Thursday, March 13.*—The influence which one mind exerts over another in intercourse, and even in remote association, may be greater than is commonly imagined. Particularly is this true of the great characters which have flourished upon the stage of public existence, in all the various spheres of action. Hazlitt owed his eminence to contact with the genius of Coleridge. Numerous other instances might be marked in the development of great powers, and influence widely felt among men, where the spring might be traced to the utmost indefinable charm that lingers around a great man, and attracts the aspiring soul.

"It is indeed a happy constitution of the human mind that we are led to pay this homage due to great genius and transcendent acquirement. It has an elevating influence upon individual sentiment and social harmony, while it softens

and purifies the noblest and worthiest faculties of our endowment. But, while the mind pays this devotion to its brother-spirit, there is abuse in merging it into a superstitious reverence; and we often assign to the sayings and regulations of distinguished men a higher place in controlling our judgment and opinion than is wise or needful. There is some danger of assimilating ourselves so closely to the characters of others as to forfeit that originality of thought which is the beauty of a great mind."

"*Friday, March 14.* . . . This is a day of sad and conscience-tormenting reflections to me. It is the last day of my twenty-first year. About three months and one-half after I entered this year of my life, I was sent forth to preach the gospel; and the charge of two small places, with a little more than fifty immortal souls in each Church, was consigned to my inexperienced oversight. . . .

. . . "At the closing up of the concerns of another year it is proper that I should examine the accounts of my stewardship; but O, the long pages of defalcation and dishonest dealing sicken the heart, and are enough to make the brain reel! What have I done to glorify my God, and fulfil the designs of my earthly existence? I have stood in the sacred place, between the living and the dead; but what a mockery have been my attempts at speaking of the wisdom and salvation of God! I have been the

nominal spiritual pastor of a people ; but what good have I done them ?

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“ But how vain is the praise of flesh without the approbation and blessing of God ! How many souls have been pricked to the heart, and cried out for salvation ? How many have been brought to the marvellous light of Christ’s kingdom ? How many professing Christians have been stirred, by my teachings and example, to increased diligence, and are further advanced toward heaven than at the commencement of the year ? I have lived only three miles, and at the furthest only nine, from my father’s family. There I have often enjoyed the society of my parents, and two sisters, younger than myself ; whenever I have appeared amid the family circle, the stern brow of my father would relax with a joyful smile, as he proffered his hand to his only ‘ boy ;’ the warm kiss of a mother’s love would be impressed on my lips ; the fond caresses of my young sisters would show how their buoyant hearts twined round their brother’s,—but O, how unworthy of all this pure love and parental blessing have I been !

“ Do I look only on the dark side ? Where is the bright and sunny one ? Surely I have had some good meetings, some assistance from the blessed Spirit, some lofty and heavenly hopes and aspirations. But it is well to feel one’s faults. I would be grateful for the good, but must sorrow

deeply over the evil—the gross and devilish. How pitiful my personal growth in grace, and in conformity to the Divine Spirit! How faithless, and feeble, and formal have been my prayers! How little have I studied the precious Bible, and made it my counsellor, and the light to my wilderness-path! How have I been attracted by the follies of the world; and the sweet-toned flattery of man has seemed more pleasant to my ear than the welcome of my well-pleased Judge! The glittering prizes of earthly distinction have seemed more worthy to my ambitious soul than the ‘crown of righteousness!’ The leanness of my own heart has disabled me to enrich the people. . . . How can a man bring forth from his treasure things both new and old, to scatter among the people, when he has no treasures? O, the leanness, leanness!”

“*Saturday, March 15.*—What!—twenty-two years old, and no better? What is swifter than time? It speeds us to eternity. It is my birthday anniversary, and thoughts, half-sad, half-hopeful, crowd upon my mind.” . . .

“*Monday, March 24.* . . . How little do I grow in grace! How much of my time is mispent! Must we not be examined for our idleness at the bar of God? I deeply feel the truth of Mr. Wesley’s words: ‘To continual watchfulness and prayer ought to be added continual employment. For grace flies a vacuum as well as nature; and the devil fills what grace does not fill.’

“Some one has said that idleness leaves the soul a blank for the devil to write what he pleases on—and surely an idle person must be greatly subject to his control. Every instant of our precious time should be employed as usefully as possible; our heart and our hands should ever be full. This must qualify us for duty, and increase our spiritual graces.”

“*Friday, May 31.*—Changes have taken place in my situation since the date of the last record. Circumstances have forbidden that attention to this memorandum which I have designed to bestow, and therefore, what I now have to note, must be a review. The 11th of May closed my labours with the people on the Westville and Bethany Circuit; and I took my final leave of them. The many pleasant and spiritually profitable seasons enjoyed among them live only in sweet remembrance. The year’s labour will be the more indelibly impressed upon my heart because it was the first of my experience in the career of an itinerant preacher. Who can tell the anxieties, the misgivings, the struggles that possess the breast of the young minister of the gospel, as for the first time he holds forth tremblingly the word of life? How utterly impotent is he without divine grace! I would that in the recollections of the last year there were less failures and transgressions to torment and cause sorrow. I would that greater assiduity and faithfulness had marked my course, and given

me more seals to my ministry. But I have left those dear friends in the hand of a watchful Providence, and to the mercy of a loving Saviour, and trust that they will never want the true Bread of Life.

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"The conference has done, and I have been appointed to this place, (Milford, New-Haven District, Conn.) Here I arrived yesterday. .

. . . "O that God would fire me with love divine, and with a quenchless zeal for the spread of his glory in the conversion of precious souls!"

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"*Wednesday, June 4.*—Last Sunday I opened my pulpit labours in this place, and was somewhat blest in bearing the cross, though afflicted with a severe cold upon my lungs. . . .

"Thus it is evident that much is to be accomplished with small means. Where shall I go in this hour of loneliness and distress? Shall I sink beneath my load? Shall I cease my endeavours in the midst of this darkness and almost hopelessness? *No!* I have never yet learned that. Hope does yet live. I can look to One whose arm is yet valiant and strong. How often has he brought light out of darkness, and infused strength into his weakest servants! I will not cherish despair. I will look to Heaven. I will throw my little all into the hands of the Lord. The cause of my Master now calls on me to sacrifice and toil, and spend myself for others. The

glory of the cross demands all this. O, Father in heaven, help, for Christ's sake, for thy help is needed!"

"*Tuesday, June 10.*—Matters brighten. Last Sunday was in some respects a good day. In the morning the congregation was quite thin; in the afternoon the body of the church was crowded; in the evening it was full, galleries and all. This is encouraging; for it is important that the people come within the sound of the truth."

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"*Wednesday, June 25.* . . . My heart is much encouraged at seeing an increased desire for holiness and the revival of God's work, in the words, and prayers, and ways of this dear people; but I feel the need of far more willingness to throw aside all earthly hopes, and expect my reward at the hands of my Redeemer. This vain heart looks with too much secret eagerness for the favour of men. And yet I am willing to sacrifice myself upon the altar of the gospel. I would be holy, but thou, my God, must give the power! O that I might be so dis severed from the world as to aim only at the glory of God and the eternal recompense!

"The news of the death of C——E——W——, a former friend of mine, has deeply reminded me of the casualties to which we are exposed, and that even in the life of youth we are in death. I think he was of the same age with myself, even to a day; and for nearly a year we

enjoyed some precious seasons together in a band meeting. He was a young artist of more than usual promise; his brother R—— ranks very high in this country.”

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“*Wednesday, July 16.*—An attentive and intensely interested perusal of the memoir of Bramwell has quickened my spiritual desire for holiness—that living power which has infused strength into so many, and made them flaming heralds of the cross. I am becoming more and more dissatisfied with my low living. There are some things in his experience hard to be understood, but they are spiritually discerned. O that I had his power in prayer! There is the secret. There is the cause of success. Such frequency, such faith in the closet-devotion must prevail. O, my God, hide not thy face forever!”

CHAPTER VII.

CAMP-MEETING AT STEPNEY, CONN. — ACCOUNT GIVEN BY A BROTHER MINISTER — STATE OF HEALTH — STYLE OF PREACHING — JOURNAL — SYSTEMATIC RULES OF LIFE — RAPID DECLINE OF HEALTH — ARRIVAL HOME — LAST SERMON — JOURNAL — RETURNS TO MILFORD — JOURNAL — RETURNS HOME — SICKNESS — DEATH-BED SCENE.

DURING the last week in August he attended a camp-meeting at Stepney. Here he wrestled earnestly for the blessing of "full salvation." The Holy Ghost with its sanctifying influence visited his soul, and prepared him to return to his station, burning with holy zeal. The following sketch was prepared after his decease by a brother minister and intimate friend, and will be read with interest:—

"The scene which is described in the following sketch, and which greatly interested the feelings of the writer, occurred during the continuance of a camp-meeting held at Stepney, Conn., and is written from memory, after more than a year has elapsed. While memory too often proves treacherous and unreliable, yet in this instance such were the impressions made upon my mind by the intense struggle of our beloved Stephen for purity of heart, and the consequent joy and peace that filled his soul, with the clear and happy evidence which he

gave to all of the victory he had gained through the precious blood of the Lamb, that nothing has transpired to dim the recollection of that cherished scene.

“While many upon the camp-ground, both preachers and members, were deeply impressed with the importance of seeking a deeper work of grace in their hearts, and that ‘holiness without which no man shall see the Lord,’ no one perhaps evinced a stronger purpose of soul, or was more untiring in the use of appointed means to secure the blessings of God’s salvation, than was our lamented friend, the subject of this sketch. Indeed, such appeared to be his insatiable hungerings and thirstings for righteousness, that every breath seemed the breath of prayer, that he might be filled with all the fulness of the love of his Divine Master.

“It was in the tent occupied by the people of his charge that God was often pleased so to reveal himself as to make his manifested presence felt and known by all. On the Wednesday evening of the meeting, Stephen being quite unwell, and very much exhausted with fatigue, I was requested by his father to persuade him, if possible, to leave the prayer circle where he had so long been, and seek repose in the tent where the preachers lodged. As I approached the tent, the voice of prayer and the song of praise fell sweetly upon my ear, and as I entered, such a sense of the divine presence overwhelmed me

as left no doubt that, in answer to prayer, God had revealed himself in a peculiar manner to this little band of disciples. Stephen was in the centre of the tent, surrounded by the people whom he dearly loved, and all were drinking of the same fountain and filled with the same spirit. After Stephen had again offered the oft-repeated prayer for a richer baptism of the Holy Ghost, the power of God so came upon him, that he sank almost insensible into his chair, while joy beamed upon every feature of his countenance, and in broken accents he magnified the efficacy of that all-cleansing blood which had washed all his sin away. Prayer was again offered, and the people were dismissed with the invocation of the divine blessing; but so deeply were all interested in the exercises of the meeting, that a general disposition prevailed to protract it still longer. The circumstance of the serious indisposition of their preacher, however, and the absolute necessity of rest and quiet to him, was adverted to as a reason why the exercises should be closed. The propriety of this course was evident to all but the one whom it was most designed to benefit. At length, after much solicitation, Stephen was induced to make an effort to leave the place, but not having recovered his physical strength, he was carried to the tent where his father lodged, exclaiming as he went: 'Glory to God for his redeeming love!' He threw himself on the bed for repose, but sleep

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was a stranger to his eyelids; and from the fullness of his heart he ceased not to give praise unto God. Notwithstanding the most urgent entreaties were used to prevail upon him to remain in the tent, as he recovered his strength he insisted upon returning again among his people, assuring us that the God whom he so much loved would give him strength sufficient for his day. He left us between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, and as I was informed the next day by his brethren, he continued in prayer and praise until the morning dawn. In this happy frame of mind he continued, and at the last public meeting held upon the ground—the love-feast—he arose in the preachers' stand and declared what great things the Lord had done for his soul."

To the great blessing which he received on this occasion he alludes, as will be seen in the succeeding extract from his journal. The term of his pastoral labours after this was very brief. His health had never been fully reestablished after the close of his collegiate life, and had been gradually failing under the performance of his ministerial duties. His exertions at the camp-meeting left his physical system prostrated, and he was compelled shortly after to abandon his station, and the work to which every affection of his heart, as well as all the energies of his mind, were devoted, and return to his father's house in New-Haven. Twice on the following

Sabbath he proclaimed from the pulpit the message of his Lord, in extreme bodily weakness, but in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. These were his last public efforts, and it seems not inappropriate here to insert the remarks upon the characteristics of his preaching by one well qualified to give an opinion.

“He preached the gospel as a self-sacrificing system, and well did he exemplify it in practice, esteeming no labour too arduous, or self-deprivation too great, if thus the cause of Christ could be glorified. . . . In preaching his doctrine was sound, his views clear, his words touching: his whole frame shook under the weight of his message. Bright thoughts, like angels, flitted so swiftly before the mind, that recollection became paralyzed with wonder—it was a continued stream of heartfelt eloquence.” . . .

On the 16th of September he writes in his journal as follows:—

“I am convinced that very much of my inactivity and unsuccessfulness must be ascribed to a want of searching self-examination. At several times it has been my purpose to relinquish this custom of preserving any journal of thoughts and doings, as profitless to myself; and I cannot suppose it will be of service to others. To this my mind was fully resolved after the last entry; and I have been about to burn these, with other papers. But I hesitate. I find the need of many guards to keep the entrances to my heart. Per-

haps my pen has not been sufficiently minute and close in its work. By more thorough and systematic notice of my feelings, and daily experiences, thus reducing it nearer to a diary, I think this practice will be more useful to me.

“My life cannot be very full of novelty or striking incident. Still, whose subjects of thought, and trials of real life, are at times more thrilling, and filled with more practical interest, than those of the Methodist preacher? I will begin here afresh, then, to search my heart and ways, if God will give me the illumination of the Spirit, and see in what respect and way I can be improved.

“It becomes me to be very grateful to God for his mercies to my soul within a few past weeks. At the Stepney camp-meeting, during the last week of August, my Saviour was manifested to me in such great power and glory, as I never before enjoyed. I have heard many complain of religious noise, as being the product of ungodly fanaticism; but O, when the divine love flowed into my unworthy heart so abundantly, how could I help making a noise? No, it was impossible. It was one continual shout. I will praise the Lord that he has visited me.

“And since that occasion, my panting after God has been stronger; my views of ‘perfect love’ have been clearer, and my reaches after it more earnest; my aim at the glory of God has been more single, and my purpose to feed the people with the true ‘bread of life’ fuller. Our

meetings have grown in interest and heavenly influence. The baptism of the Holy Ghost, and fire, has frequently descended upon us. I think the prospects of Zion in this place are brightening."

"*Saturday, September 20.* . . . Last evening our class-meeting was good. I was wearied and unwell in body, but the friends said it was the best of the kind they ever attended. They had been trying to live nearer to God during the preceding week."

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"*Thursday, September 25.*—My father preached to this charge, and I tried to speak to the New-Haven people on Sabbath. After labouring thrice at the Second Church in that city, I felt that I had talked too long and too loud. In the afternoon I was astonished to find that I had occupied about one hour and a half with one discourse. My presiding elder, and father, advise me in no case to preach more than twice a day. I find it a peculiarly heavy burden to address those who knew me but a few years ago, a little fellow playing in the streets with my companions. But I have not experienced so much of the divine favour within a few days as has been usual of late. I have been sorely harassed by temptations to evil. But I am fixed to serve the Lord. O, for more love and faith !

"The prayer-meeting at brother C——P——'s on Tuesday evening was good, but I was in much bodily pain."

“*Saturday, September 27.*—Feeling the necessity for more *system* in my studies, and habits of life, in order to the improvement of time and for success in my labours, I have adopted the following rules to be undeviatingly observed:—

“*I. Studies.* The order to be observed in these is this,—1. From five to seven (or breakfast) shall be spent upon the course laid down by the bishops and conference committee: (1.) Fletcher’s Christian Perfection; (2.) Bishop Watson’s Apology; (3.) Watson’s Wesley; (4.) In connexion with the ‘Bible as to ordinances,’ fourth part of Watson’s Institutes, Hibbard on Baptism, &c.; (5.) Mental and Moral Philosophy; (6.) Geography; (7.) Discipline, in connexion with Emory’s History, &c. 2. Till ten, in General Theological Reading; in the first place, Wesley’s Works (last edition) by course. 3. Till twelve, in writing, especially the preparation of sermons for the pulpit. 4. Till two P. M. in miscellaneous reading, also during the remainder of the day’s leisure; in the first place, Alison’s History of Europe.

“*II. Devotional exercises.* 1. Rising at four in the morning, the time intervening till five shall be devoted to reading the Old Testament Scriptures, and prayer. 2. It shall be my aim always to have two special seasons of closet prayer in the course of the day. 3. Again, before retiring, which shall be at ten, when practicable, the New Testament Scriptures, and prayer, shall occupy

a season. 4. Also, especially before going out to pastoral labour, or social meetings, or into the pulpit, particular care must be taken to commune with God, and receive the presence of Christ.

“III. *Pastoral duties.* 1. Some portion of every afternoon, excepting Saturday and Sunday, after two o’clock, shall be spent in visiting from house to house, and this work must be so divided as to allow a portion to each day. 2. The specific object to be kept in view is, inquiry concerning the state of souls, and suitable warning or encouragement to them, so that trifling conversation, or evasion of religious topics, are to be guarded against particularly. 3. Where it is possible, (and nearly always it will be,) prayer shall be had with those visited. 4. It becomes me to be *diligent* in this matter; for the common excuse of want of capacity for such labour is generally presented instead of real indolence and want of love for souls. How sweet this work becomes after a little to the truly pious heart! Thus alone can the confidence of the people be gained, and their state understood.

“IV. *Things to be particularly avoided by me,* on account of my constitutional temperament: 1. Man’s praise and honour. 2. Speaking concerning the character of others. 3. Speaking too indiscriminately concerning matters which might better be kept closed. 4. Being ashamed of confessing ignorance, in order to become enlighten-

ed. 5. Eating too much of that kind of food which is hurtful, though agreeable to the taste. 6. Buying without the present means of paying. 7. Bashfulness. 8. My besetting sin.

“V. *Things to be particularly attended to by me.* 1. To be deeply impressed that divine omniscience rests upon me, and my deeds must all be brought into judgment. 2. A more feeling sense that all my mercies come through *Jesus Christ*. 3. A continual struggle for *more* of my Master’s image, *more* holiness, *more* deadness to the world and living in the suburbs of heaven. 4. A single aim at divine glory in the salvation of immortal souls, especially in preaching, and choosing topics for preaching. 5. Fasting; the Friday of each week must be of special spiritual exercise in this respect. Yet, here we are apt to be superstitious, performing this as a sort of penance.

“O, what need have I of greater care for my soul, sterner watchfulness, purer spirituality! Soon I must be an inhabitant of the unseen world, and it becomes me to be preparing for its blessedness. All our powers must be trained. Our eye must ever be turned thither. We must be waiting, yet with constant labour, for our call to come up higher. How great the work! How busy, absorbed, indefatigable should we be! This day may be our last. If I should be called before the morrow’s sunrise, what work should be performed? Let this query abide in my heart.”

Whatever of interest occurs in the brief remaining period of his life, and its closing scenes, is given in the language of his mother.

"*Friday, November 14, 1845.*—He came home looking very unwell. Said he was seized Wednesday night with a severe pain in his side; but having an appointment to preach Thursday evening at brother B——'s, three miles on the way to New-Haven, he walked to the place in great pain, preached, and remained all night. The next morning he rode into town with brother B——, but expressed his determination to return the same day. Knowing his disposition to do more than he was able,—preaching three times on the Sabbath, and twice during the week, besides class and prayer-meeting,—his father and myself strenuously opposed his returning until he was better. Much against his feelings, he consented to stay.

"On Sabbath, (his father having been called to New-York by urgent business, and there being no one else to supply his place,) Stephen, though scarcely able to walk, gathered all the strength he could, and preached morning and afternoon. In the morning from the text, 'Set thy house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live:' in the afternoon from 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' I was astonished to hear him, knowing his weakness of body. It seemed to me that he was delivering his last message. And so it proved. This was his last

pulpit effort. A man and his wife were awakened, and soon after converted, and are now excellent members of the Church. This proved the commencement of an extensive revival in Saint John-street Church. In the evening Stephen remarked that preaching had cured his pain in his side,—but he was evidently a sick man. On Tuesday we sent for Dr. H——, who seemed alarmed to find him so ill; said he must desist entirely from preaching for the present. Partial relief was afforded him; but two days after he was seized with violent spasms in his bowels. The doctor was sent for, also his father, who was absent from home. His sufferings were intense. He said unless he was helped, he should soon go. His father coming in, kneeled by the bed, and prayed most fervently. Stephen, clasping his hands together, exclaimed, ‘I am happy, perfectly easy; the Lord has cured my pain. This is like my camp-meeting blessing.’

“A mild bilious fever followed this attack; but he walked out, and around the house, reading and writing every day, though looking very poorly.

“His Journal thus refers to his state of mind at this time, under date of

“‘NEW-HAVEN, *January 4, 1846.*—It is more than seven weeks since I was among my charge at Milford, having been confined at home by severe illness. When in great pain, and forced to keep my bed, my religious enjoyment was

great. And at one time, when it seemed that life would be loosed before morning, all was well, and my soul was triumphant. But since then I fear I have not lived sufficiently close to God to enjoy his favour and smiles. My body has been debilitated, and my mind depressed. My physician, Dr. H——, has been very kind, but his attentions have not eradicated the causes of my disease. . . . I must trust in the Lord. He can save the sick. I would be ready to suffer in his name, and do all his righteous will concerning me. O, for more humility, distrust of self, and prayer to God!

“His throat became a little sore, but he had gained so much his doctor did not visit him for three weeks, and he began to talk about returning to Milford. Next to his Saviour, his soul seemed devoted to his station. We put him off time after time that he had appointed to go. We could not convince him of his inability to do anything for them. But he had been absent ten weeks, they had no preacher, and he thought his presence might comfort them. He seemed so uneasy and anxious, his father and myself finally consented to let him go, though contrary to our better judgment.

“The last entry in his Journal reads thus:—

““On the 23d of February, being somewhat improved, and believing I could do something among my people, I left this place for Milford. I took a severe cold, and though I persisted in

the hope of yet labouring this year, my complaint in the throat became so bad that both myself and people were convinced that I should relinquish the charge of a Church. Friends and physicians thought it absolutely necessary for my life. On the 1st instant, (March,) therefore after preaching by Rev. N. T——, in the afternoon, I stated to the congregation, as well as I could, in broken accents, my condition, the cause of my leaving, and that I must bid them farewell for the present year. Mutual affection caused many tears to flow. I have left Milford with regret, and I believe with the Christian sympathy of my congregation. May the good Master supply their wants, give them a holy, zealous man, and increase godliness in his professed followers.'

"With tears he said to me, when he returned, 'I have done all I can,—I must give it up.'

"From this time his disease seemed altogether located in his throat. The best physicians were consulted, and all that the most ardent affection could prompt was done for his recovery. I heard a friend say he did not doubt but a *thousand prayers* had been offered for his restoration to health. But all was of no avail. His earthly warfare was drawing to a close, and naught remained to be accomplished but the triumph of his death.

"I should judge he had a presentiment for a year or two, that his life would be short. I can recollect his saying to me at one time, 'Mother,

I think I shall die young—I sometimes think I shall die of consumption.’ In reply to my smile of incredulity, for he seemed to me then as likely to live as any one, he said, ‘I am sincere, mother.’ In looking over his books, we find many pencil marks referring to the subject of death, which seem to indicate the current of his thoughts.

“*Tuesday, March 17.*—He seemed much better and had been more comfortable for three or four days previous. He sat up, and read his morning lesson from the Bible, as he had done every morning during his sickness. I expressed my fear that he would read too much, being very weak. He pressed it to his bosom, and replied: ‘Mother, I love my little Bible—I don’t think it hurts me to read—you see I lay it down occasionally and rest.’

“He remarked that his throat felt better, and that he had some appetite. ‘Seven weeks from to-morrow is conference,’ he said; ‘do you think I will go, mother?’ ‘I fear not, my son; I think you will hardly be able.’ He sent for his father several times during the day, to make several requests of him—to tell him of several books he had lent, and such small matters of a worldly nature. He asked for a little trunk containing his papers, which was brought, and placed by his bedside. He busied himself some time in arranging, and looking them over. He had told me several weeks before, that he kept

a journal; but said, 'I think I had better burn it, mother,—I may not live.' I replied, 'Let it be for the present,' and he seemed satisfied. He said nothing about it when looking over them at this time.

"Holding up a bundle of papers, he remarked: 'These, mother, are sermons that I have written out myself. You know I never take notes into the pulpit; but when I have had a good time preaching, I like to write out my sermon after I return home. Here is one that I preached the Sunday after I returned from Stepney Camp-meeting, where I received that great blessing. The text is, "They that have turned the world upside down, have come hither also." The people looked as if they thought it a strange text. Would you like to hear it read?' His sister read it aloud, and soon after the papers were put away. I was distressed, fearing he would fatigue himself too much, for he seemed in an unusually cheerful mood, and inclined to talk freely about various matters. But he said he felt much better than he had done, and had strong hopes that he would recover. But alas, how short-lived the hope! About twelve o'clock that night he was seized with spasms in his bowels. His father having gone for the physician, he said: 'Mother, I can live but a short time; kneel by me and pray.' In an agony of spirit I kneeled by his bedside, and tried to pray. He responded heartily to almost every word, and

as I arose, he exclaimed: 'Thank God for a praying mother! Glory to God! I am happy, ready to go!'

"His pains were awful beyond description, but he had moments of ease, which he improved in praises to the Most High. That awful night I shall never forget while memory lasts! He repeated these lines—

'My soul mounted higher,
In a chariot of fire,
And the moon it was under my feet;'

and exclaimed: 'Mother, when I go I shall go in a chariot of fire!'

"He spoke with much solicitude of his sisters at the South: 'It is so long since I have seen them—I can't live long unless I get relieved soon. Tell them to meet me in glory; I shall never meet them here.'

"The next morning (Wednesday) he was free from pain, but O how changed! Completely prostrate in body, but still happy. In the evening his spasms again returned with great violence. About one o'clock he became composed and easy. The doctor said he could not possibly live through another attack. Thursday morning he was the picture of death—no strength at all, scarcely able to raise his hand. His father, greatly overcome at seeing his condition, burst into tears and said to me, 'He cannot live eight-and-forty hours; we must bring our minds to

part with him. How sweetly he talks of Jesus! 'Let him go,' said I. I felt then for the first time, as if I could give him up.

"I went to the bedside, and Stephen said to me, 'Mother, does your faith fail you? You have thought I would get well—have you given me up? They all seem alarmed about me, but I feel perfectly easy, and my soul is happy now, but I don't know how I shall feel when I come to die;' and the thought seemed to give him momentary uneasiness. His father replied, 'It is not necessary that you receive dying grace *now*, my son; when it is needed, God will bestow it: "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be."' This satisfied him. At once his faith was reassured, and his countenance beamed with heavenly joy. My feelings at this time I cannot describe. Wane and wasted, there lay my dear and only son. We were so anxious to have him better that we really hoped he was; but we rejoiced with trembling.

"During this day he spoke several times of his past life—mourned over his backslidings, while in college. 'How much I lost,' he said, 'but the blood of Christ has washed all my sins away, and made me a new creature—yes, a *new creature*.' With much fervency, he expressed his thanks for a strict religious training.

"From Thursday night until Saturday morning he was free from pain, and we hoped he would now have rest. On this morning, Satur-

day, the 21st of March, he was removed to another bed, shaved, and made comfortable by a change of clothing. He expressed himself as feeling so much refreshed and improved, that again we were almost tempted to cherish hope of his recovery. But scarcely an hour had elapsed before the spasm returned, and we felt that hope was now altogether vain. The doctor assured us he would do all he could to relieve him, but said he could not live but a short time. Stephen called me to the bedside, and asked, 'Mother, what did the doctor say?' 'I fear, my son, you cannot live.' 'Did the doctor say so?' 'Yes, he fears you cannot.'

"From the first of his sickness he had several times remarked, that he should like to live and preach the gospel to sinners, but if his work was done, he was ready to go; he left it in the hands of the Lord. Yet, I feared he would feel some regret when the time of his departure came. But as with a heart full of agony I announced to him the doctor's opinion, he looked up smilingly, without manifesting the least surprise, and said, 'All right, mother.'

"His pains continued very severe about an hour; he then felt easy, and asked his father to pray. We kneeled around, a grief-stricken family. The pride and joy of our hearts was about to be taken from us, and though knowing that '*He doeth all things well,*' yet, in the bitterness of our great sorrow, and the short-sightedness of

our wisdom, we could not but inquire, 'Why is it that we are thus afflicted?' Never were the sustaining influences of our holy religion more needed, and never were they felt to be so precious.

"With much solemnity, and the utmost affection, but with the calm composure of one leaving home for a pleasant journey, he called each member of the family to the bedside, and in few, but strikingly appropriate words, bid them each a last farewell. His father said, 'Have you no word for father?' 'I have words,' he replied, 'but cannot utter them.' Making a circle around his own head, and pointing to his father's he said, 'A crown, my father—and stars—*stars!*' Turning to myself, who was standing by his side, he said, 'My mother! O, my mother! what shall I say? *Gratitude!* GRATITUDE!'

"'O Stephen,' I exclaimed, 'what shall I do when you are gone?' '*Serve the Lord,*' he replied, with strong emphasis.

"A sister in the Church coming in, whose powerful and fervent supplications in meeting had always delighted him, he asked her to pray. She commenced, but, overcome by her feelings, was obliged to stop. His father finished the prayer, and as we arose from our knees, Stephen raised his emaciated arms and shouted with a loud voice, 'Glory to God! glory to God! glory to God!' His arms fell, and he lay apparently unconscious for several moments. His father

exclaimed, 'He has gone, with glory on his lips.' Looking up, he smiled and said, '*I am not dead.*'

"The scene that followed cannot be described. The room seemed filled with the glory of God. Many weeping friends had gathered round, and each felt the solemn grandeur of the thought, that a soul was 'just on the verge of heaven.' His mouth was full of praises, and his voice, which for weeks had been a whisper, owing to the condition of his throat, was loud and clear. 'My sins are all forgiven—I am washed, pure and white, in the blood of Jesus—yes, I am pardoned—not a doubt, not a fear, not a cloud. All is well—*more* than well!' Some minutes intervened between these expressions of joy, when he seemed to be communing with Heaven.

"He asked that the hymn commencing with,

'O thou God of my salvation,'

might be sung. While the friends were singing, his countenance beamed with heavenly radiance: he said, 'I cannot sing now, but I shall sing up *there.*' As they sang the line,

'Angels now are hov'ring round us,'

he exclaimed, pointing upwards, 'don't you see them?' At the end of the fourth verse, which closes with,

'Love and praise to *Christ* belong,'

he motioned for them to stop. That one sentiment seemed to embody all he wished to express.

“Some one throwing open a window-blind, a ray of sunlight filled the room with its departing brilliancy. ‘The sun is setting, is it not?’ he asked. His father replying ‘Yes,’ Stephen exclaimed, ‘*Mine is just rising!*’

“Extending one hand to me, to show me that the blood was settling around his nails, and raising the other high above his head, he looked around on all in the room, and said with great emphasis: ‘I go from this bed to a *crown!*’ Then, as if communing with himself, he asked, ‘Is this dying? no, it is *living*. Going home—yes, *home!*’ Looking upward, he exclaimed, ‘A chariot—two chariots!’ and calmly stretching out his limbs, and folding his arms across his breast, he whispered—‘Home—farewell,’ and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, a smile of beauty, Heaven’s own impress, resting on his lips, and remaining there, even when shrouded for the tomb.

“On the Wednesday succeeding his decease, his remains were carried to the St. John-street Church, where a most solemn and impressive discourse was delivered by Rev. Abiathar M. Osbon. At the close of the services of the church, the body was borne to the cemetery,—there to repose beneath the green sod till the resurrection morning.”

The writer of the following lines, whose fame is widely spread, not only as an author, but as a

warm-hearted and sympathetic friend, was an eye-witness of his last moments, and thus gives beautiful expression to his feelings on the occasion:—

ON THE DEATH OF REV. STEPHEN B. BANGS.

I stood beside the bed
Where lay the youthful saint;
The latest hope of earth had fled—
The fleeting pulse was faint.

Bright was his brow, and fair,—
Bright in that fearful hour;
The stamp of brilliant mind was there,—
The mind of truth and power.

Pain had reduced his frame—
Wan, wasted, worn he lay;
Yet on his faded cheek there came
Joy's brightest, purest ray.

Pain could not dim the shine
That fill'd his trustful eye;
Pain could not shake the faith divine
That bore his soul on high.

With what a smile of bliss,
In what a heavenly tone,
He said, "How precious Jesus is,"
And pointed to the throne!

"No cloud upon my mind,
O, see! I'm going home,
In heaven's blest realms a crown to find!
I come, dear Lord, I come!"

Sleep, like a gentle dove,
Came to his eyelids then;

But soon, with look of joy and love,
Fervent, he spake again:—

“Salvation! Sing, O sing
My favourite hymn once more,
Ere my glad spirit spreads her wing
For Canaan’s happy shore!”

’Twas sung; a prayer was made;
Each sad adieu was past;
His face in angel light array’d,
These striking words were last:—

“In the sweet evening skies,
Say, does the *sun decline*?”
“It does.”—“Glory! then *mine must rise*
In splendour all divine!”

Rapture more rapt was given,
Till the last moment’s close,
When the pure spirit pass’d to heaven,
As perfume leaves the rose.

Was this the bed of pain?
Was this the couch of death?
Ah, such the faithful Christian’s gain,
When he resigns his breath!

It was not death to me;
No sadness touch’d my heart;
It thrill’d me with strange joy to see
The sainted one depart.

And, O! when I must die,
Lord, grant thy mercy then,
That I may reach the same bright sky,
And see his face again.

J. E. LOVELL.

NEW-HAVEN, *March*, 1846.

1880-1881

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R E M A I N S .



REMAINS.

REMARKS ON HIS WRITINGS.

MORE than twenty manuscript sermons were found among the papers of Mr. Bangs, a few of which are selected for publication. As will be seen by reference to his Journal, he was not in the habit of writing out discourses previous to their delivery, or even taking notes into the pulpit, but often wrote them out from memory, during the week succeeding their delivery.

The essays are selected from a small book of manuscripts, dated mostly at Bloomville, New-York, 1843. He was then about twenty years of age,—had been compelled by ill health to suspend his studies in the Wesleyan University, being then in the senior year,—and was there, by change of scene and exercise, seeking to recover that which he had lost by confinement and too severe application. His own words, from a passage prefaced to these manuscripts, will best explain the circumstances and objects of their composition:—

“These pages have been written during a sum-

mer visit to Bloomville, Delaware County, New-York. The snatches of time in the interval of hay-making, grain-gathering, &c., I have endeavoured thus to improve by reading, and thinking, and composing. Custom renders offence a pleasure, and task a delight. The schoolboy, when the master claims the little effort of his pen, murmurs, and goes to his mental drudgery with a heavy will; but that same requisition may plant a seed of interest and enjoyment in this delightful occupation, which may ripen into a Johnson. Thus it is that continued and persevering practice in the mental as well as physical exercise, transforms the taskful into the delightful and alluring."

The essays and sermons are presented just as he left them, without alteration or correction in the smallest particular. Among the former is the paper on "Choice of a Profession," to which reference was made near the commencement of this work.

ESSAYS.

POETRY OF EVENING.

LAST evening I stood by the farm-yard gate, after a day's hard labour. The stillness of the evening had settled upon mountain and vale, and I thought such a beautiful evening I never before enjoyed. Two long ridges of mountains stretched on to the west, and just where the sun left his parting glory, and disappeared, the lines of the perspective met, and seemed a gorge, above which the crimson flushes rose in beautiful radiance. At the foot of the northern range my uncle's farm is situate; by the side of the southern flows the incipient Delaware, skirted by thick bushes and undergrowth. The rich moonlight streamed delightfully upon the fertile meadows of the valley, and the little tumbling rivulet, bearing its tribute on to the Indian's River, sent up its voice of joy.

Amid these beautiful scenes, above and around, I was impressed with the feelings of poetry they awakened. It was hymned by all the voices of nature not less than the human heart; and do not these voices, heard only by the inward ear, speak far more emphatically than much of the noisy?

There are many associations which cluster about the moonlit hour to make it poetical. The powers of the intellect are awake ; memory, with remarkable power, sways the soul, and we pay instinctive reverence to the voice of the past, for it belongs to the history of eternity ; it once was ours, but is no more. The future is invisible, without the reach of our judgment ; the present is in our grasp but a moment, for the insatiable past lays hold ere we can use it ; but at the close of day we are able to recount the moments that have fled away, and we feel—

“ ’Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
And ask them what report they bore to heaven.”

The love of the hour of evening, and the spirit of poetry it kindles in the breast, is scorned by some, and as though it stamped an indelible disgrace, they call it “the lover’s hour,”—the hour for “courting.”

But there is something interesting in the thought that this hour feeds the noblest and worthiest passion of our nature, in its purity and sincerity. At the same time that we feel the stirrings of ambitious impulse within, which almost invariably accompany the thoughts of youthful aspiration in this hour of contemplation, we have an evidence of the strange comingling in the heart of man. Never does the vanity of human wish, the disappointment of human hope, the fading of human honour, more

deeply impress the mind. The gloom of the feelings, as we wander through the wide extent of the desolations of the human heart, resembles the silence and awe of the churchyard, with its memorials, and we ask:—

“ Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour ?
What though we wade in wealth or soar in fame ?
Earth’s highest station ends in ‘ Here he lies !’
And ‘ Dust to dust ’ concludes her noblest song !”

But the highest feeling which the human breast can enjoy is the holiest ; and so the highest sentiment of poetry which evening inspires is the Christian. It is felt only by those who, conscious of their enrolment among the redeemed, view earth as the vestibule of that great temple in which man is to worship the God of his adoration through countless ages, and delight to think of that future which alone can be called happy.

I have seen many beautiful effusions, descriptive of the glories of the evening, but none ever reached the reality. The soul is wronged oftentimes by its material illustration ; and the poetry of evening cannot be imaged through the medium of these feeble powers. Still, though we have not the grasping imagination of Byron, or the delicate fancy of Hemans, the soul can appreciate, and the heart feel. And as I stood, wrapt in the inward picture of the outer glory that seemed to pervade creation like a thing of

life, I thought how meagre must be the conception of him whose spirit is not elevated from the rapture to the Spirit of all things,—from the created to the Creator.

August 31, 1843.

CONNEXION OF ENERGY WITH MENTAL CONQUEST.

ENERGY is not the exclusive property of the "business man." In commerce and material traffic there surely should be physical and mental energy, to forecast with wisdom and execute with vigour, so as to meet the fluctuations of affairs in the money-world. But it is not therefore that we must drive off sleepy Indolence to the studio of Literature. Energy must be the property of him who deals in human thought, and labours at the anvil of science for his own good, and the welfare of man. There is but one conquest ever made by indolence; it is the subjugation of our noblest powers to the despotism of lawless impulse. The great captain of the world's history reared the empire of his greatness upon the thrones of Europe by a sleepless and unbaffled energy that led him, with scarce one moment's warning, to go forth to his strange, unparalleled conquests; and how much more necessary is this to him who would sway the power of a master over the realms of science, and render nature and art tributaries to bear in his tri-

umphal train the trophies of his victory! *Literary ease* is not found in him who is *intent* upon the acquisition of information—whose heart is set on penetrating the arcana of knowledge. Bodily labour is not comparable with the toil of the man of letters, faithful in his pursuit; and that student who quietly folds his arms and slumbers on till a late breakfast hour, and in the recitation-room confides in the all-availing *genius* to be his hobby through the examination to the professor, is the worst of idlers, and will surely meet a due reward. It is delightful to look on that student in whom this energy is set forth, full of unrest, rising early and labouring assiduously, with the untiring *determination* toward excellence and honour; for success is written on his very action.

There is no pleasure in indifference,—that which a young man newly graduated from a college often indulges, as a respite from mental toil. But the intellect, ardent with the fixed desire, panting for the waters of knowledge, can have no rest. Others may exclaim, “Peace! peace!” but to him there is no peace. The appetite is only roused; its demands cannot yet be slighted. Our inexperience is liable to place too poor an estimate on these hours of youthful ambition, so vigorous and active. Especially is it dangerous to be listless at the close of college exertions. It may quench many a pure and noble desire, strike down many a high aspira-

tion, break many a golden hope. Absence of exertion paralyzes confidence in one's own power: its gradual habitude disposes to negligence and idleness. On the contrary, there is a union of zeal and application which is the parent of glorious success. The most restricted talents feel its influence. When a fixedness of intention and an unfaltering resolution are brought to any one engagement, they remove every clog from beneath the wheels of triumph. Earnestness brought to bear upon everything, how trivial soever, is a sure presage of achievement. Intellect might stand and reason till his locks were wet with the dews of the rising morn of another age, while Passion has achieved her work and wrought out destinies. Long as we live we must labour; the bread of idleness can never sustain the immortal spirit. But even though a consciousness of this produce an unshaken tendency to action, there is one principle in it ever to be kept in mind. That energy never will make a great and sure conquest which moves in throes and spasms, now rousing the mind in all its power to a tempest of action, now lulling into careless repose, being spent by its over-wrought excitement. It must be sober, steady, ever onward, rising with the worthiness and dignity of the object: an energy that wearies not beneath the heaviest load of duty, fears not before the most threatening obstacles; an energy fixed, wavering not:—the conquest is then sure. Genius

thus would far outdo itself, and feeble talent would be the instrument of great achievement.

April 11, 1843.

DISCHARGE OF DUTY.

It was the language of that splendid but ill-fated Queen Marie Antoinette, just before she bent beneath the guillotine—"A scrupulous discharge of duty is the only foundation of a good life." This royal woman's youth was the era of pleasure and ambition, and all the hope which her splendid station could inspire; yet here, when misfortune had developed the nobler part of her nature, and given that courage and fortitude requisite for her trials, when life had lost its value and attractiveness, and she gave the parting words to her sister, we have this noble tribute to duty. It is not a sentiment that was the exclusive property of the French queen, but it is found in the experience of every one; and lives guided by its law are attestations of its truth. This great and solemn principle of human action comes home with fullest conviction when the evening of life gathers its shades around the dwelling of man, and he has learned the reality of life which has been almost dreamed away. But youth also feels it, and with worthy search looks around for its manifestations in his exist-

ence. A natural reverence for virtue and good, and an education in which the mind may have been directed to its destiny and responsibility, may have furnished it with longing anxieties to distinguish the path of duty from the various thoroughfares present to the choice.

There is that in human life which speaks to the present, but more that directs to the future. Still, when we reflect that the future is in one sense the consequence of the present—that the one hangs in interest and happiness on the other—"Be wise to-day" comes to the heart as the stirring motto of action. The mind, in its bird-eye glances over the to-come of its being, even in this life, will spread out the prospect of its career, but the present must be the concentration of its power and the subject of its effort. In the consideration of present good, how prone to bewilderment, to incorrect estimation! Oftentimes we cannot view the consequences of an action with the calm, sober contemplation which the bird gives to its prey before the final descent. We miss the mark, and lament our want of foresight and care.

But there is a great and unfailing source of happiness opened in the magnanimous discharge of duty. Man wanders about in the wilderness of human pleasure for it, and it becomes the object of all his ambitious pursuit and aim of his being. But it is only found where the object of affection is commensurate with the capacity and the dura-

tion of the enjoyer. If the felicity be transient or partial, it cannot be perfect; it is unsuited to the eternal and infinitely-increasing desires of the soul. Inasmuch as divine authority teaches us that those things which spring from and subsist by their connexion with the world must perish with the extermination of that world of matter, the spirit of man must seek, apart from wealth, and luxury, and fleshly indulgence, and human honour, and pomp, for perfect happiness; else he tasks in vain all the mines of human invention. He may be the moralist, and follow up with a scrupulous exactness all his obligations to men as worldlings, yet the goal is unreachd. If he looks higher, and seeks the perfect will of that revelation which unfolds visions of superior being, he reads, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, might, mind, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself," and finds here the substance of duty. He finds action which takes hold on happiness, comprehensive and durable as the soul itself. He studies the perfect law of love, and gradually perceives it the charter of safety, the anchor of hope, the map of his course.

January 15, 1844.

DEATH.

THE death-bed scene is the most solemn and honest of a man's life: his words are then sincere, his farewell is heard with all the credence we give to a parting. The mind of the benevolent for a moment hesitates at the bedside of Mohammed, as he utters the last words of his eventful existence, with so much pathos and earnestness proclaiming his goodness and sincerity, while the voice of the impostor trembles amid the silence gathered about the borders of the charnel home. Although Hypocrisy may sometimes falsely colour the illumination of a setting life, it is the evening hour when the heart's truest character is exhibited. Truth sits mistress of the scene of death. The expectation of death reveals the true purpose of life. A young lady of mental accomplishment, personal fascination, rich parentage, encompassed by all the blandishments of worldly association, betrothed to one whose clever heart promised much domestic felicity, was laid low on the pillow of disease. While Death with his horrid reality stared her shrinking spirit in the face, she vowed, if her life was spared, she would seek—religion!

She told the secret of life. With a gaze into the unseen, and about to whisper an adieu to her false idols, she discerned the object of her

loss, the anchor of her hope—which now was the tempest of despair. If religion be the connecting chain between earth and heaven, and earth be but the vestibule of the temple of holiness, where the guest must be robed in the wedding-garment to enter into the supper of the Lamb, what else can give courage and support in the dread passage of the postern of earth and entrance upon the unknown eternity? Its presence illumines the shades of the valley, and points to the track of light up the holy mountain to the city of the living God; without it, the path is darker and gloomier, down to the interminable depths of woe.

The instinctive dread of the final struggle of our mortal nature can be conquered only by one powerful aid—divine grace. A patricidal criminal expired on the gallows, glorying in his foul deed, and professing the utmost satisfaction with his elevated situation. This, perchance, was the consequence of the obduracy which a long course of crime gives to the conscience, and debars emotion, so that, in the momentous language of holy writ, the soul is given over to hardness of heart. But such instances as these mar not the force and truth of religious influence.

Divine grace, then, is the support of the soul in this last hour of affliction. The philosophy of the ancients shrank from the verge of the grave, and threw over it misty speculations. The genius of Voltaire and the faithlessness of Rous-

seau have availed nothing; and Shelley exclaimed, with tears, "I have been wrong—all wrong!" The heroism and sternness of the nation-conqueror Napoleon melted before its power like ice before the sun. Never has anything stood with fearless front against the terrible onset of this last and greatest foe but the faith of the Christian. If this be an effectual deliverer, it becomes not the Christian to fear his adversary. Deiphobus-shaped, the gods of worldly confidence and adoration may promise with deceit upon their lips, as Minerva to the noble Hector; but the Christian's God is truth itself, his promise fails not; therefore should the Christian look upon death without alarm. The worldling may deem the hope and belief of this man of God the ardour of enthusiasm, but, blind and deaf as he is, and shut against the glorious influences abroad in the moral world, let him approach the dying-bed of the saint, and he feels the truth and power of the joyful faith, while the heart of the departing Christian exclaims,—

"These lively hopes we owe,
Lord, to thy dying love;
O may we bless thy grace below,
And sing thy grace above!"

But though this glorious end rob death of his sting, and bear away from the heart tormenting fear, the Christian faith looks with eager anticipation to victory over the grave, to the destruction of the dominion of the monster, and the fall

of his wide-spread empire. It does not, with the Epicurean, degrade the undefined powers of the soul to sensual delight, and then consign them to eternal oblivion; it does not, with the Stoic, return the spirit to commingle and coëxist with the Father of spirits, and lose its identity in the Supreme Intelligence; it does not, with the Pythagorean, transmigrate it into other forms of existence, and coalesce it with the beasts that perish;—but a new and living way is opened, and revelation ushers the soul of man, a distinct and identical essence, into high and ecstatic fruitions worthy of its exalted and enduring nature—into an infinity of existence and enjoyment. Yet the glorified body of the Scriptures, the new creation from these vile humanities, is a new source of consolation and joyfulness to the believing heart. Enoch and Elijah were changed when caught up to the hidden glories of the upper sanctuary; the Saviour broke the bands of his thralldom, and rose with his most glorious body, a bright token of our own ascension;—those who see the coming of the Son of man shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye;—and every Christian dies with the confident hope, the blissful assurance, of his glorious change, that his enfranchised spirit shall not only wing away to the home of the faithful, but these bodies, purified, and spiritualized, and likened to Christ, shall form a happy reunion, and live, and live on through undying ages.

“O, joyful sound of gospel grace,
Christ shall in me appear!”

Who, then, can blame the kindling love and exclaiming hope of the burning Christian when he meditates on such great and glorious truths? Who can rebuke the rapture of the dying saint, outbreking from the melody of his heart? Though affliction, and trial, and worldly discomfiture press hard upon our peace, and almost bear us down to the earth, the termless view and the buoyant hope “lift the fainting spirit up,” and enable us to walk joyfully through the dangers and tribulations besetting our path. Though we mark the blight spreading with the first bloom, and the infant breath inhaling its fatal poison, and youth feeling the ravage upon its elastic vigour, and age knowing this arm of strength laid with resistless power upon the victim; yet there is joyful hope, for we know that we die to live forever: and as Jesus lay in the undwelt tomb of the counsellor but three days, so shall our sleep seem, and the renewed body shall spring from its rest to enjoy the fullness of the reward of the righteous. Then will the dark pall, which the disgrace and death of the parents spread over the world of man, be lifted, and the glorious effulgence of a risen eternity be poured upon those who shall have washed their polluted souls in the blood of the Victim slain on Calvary, for the redemption and life of a lost world.

January 13, 1844.

THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION.

TOTTERING age may have its fretfulness and discontent, its repine and hopelessness; but youth is the reign of the tempter's power. With all the insidiousness and sophistry which beguiled Mother Eve, he besets the youthful steps in this era of gospel light and grace. The doctrine of permanency in grace has been a mooted question among the schooled and learned since, and long before, the reformer Calvin ran his career. But every youth, yielding to the enchantments of the seducer of souls, and falling by one heedless step from the high position of faith and love he occupied in Christ, feels in his heart the perfect falsity of this alluring doctrine. The spell is broken; he finds that he must return to the bosom and confidence of his Saviour by the same way of humility and repentance which he trod when a lost and undone sinner. It is the same cry to God for mercy that he utters, the same self-abasement that he feels, the same great surrender that he makes, the same victory and enjoyment that buoys and ennobles his soul. Temptation is our portion, and through self-trust we fall an easy prey to the "roaring lion." The oldest, the strongest Christian is vulnerable, so long as he rests on his own sufficiency. Let him forsake the refuge of his stronghold for these

outer works, and the dart reaches him. The old Christian must beware; and if so, how is it with the young? He is beset around—within. His must be a constant watching—a ceaseless prayer.

“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it—
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here’s my heart, O take and seal it;
Seal it for thy courts above”—

is the language of his complaint and supplication. He bends his knee in earnestness around the family altar, and thrice in the day at his secret shrine. But this is not all: when the frightful image of his temptation rises with its haggard visage to torment him, he lifts his spiritual eyes to the heavenly hill, and Help right from the angel-band around the eternal throne flies on wings of love to his relief; the gloom of his helpless despair is scattered:—

“The’ Invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye.”

Thus he is prayerful in every avocation; thus the presence of almighty strength is felt ever nigh; thus deliverance is at hand.

If the youth confide in the circumstances that surround him to shield him from the evil; if he trust to his station, to his reputable connexion, to his hopes of the future, he is undone. A stronger than himself is against him, whom none save One can overcome. The hour of his temp-

tation arises, and he is without buckler or spear, and the dread Apollyon is the easy victor. Nor will it be safety to lay aside the panoply of faithful prayer for one moment. The poor youth, devout in the praying circle, or when the stated times of worship roll round, though he maintain, to outward vision, a comely spiritual habit—watch him in his solitude, when no eye save the All-seeing is on his thought, the passions loose, his forgetful spirit devotionless and faithless, the wily tempter creeping in, possessing the temple while its gates were unconsciously wide-spread, and the youth with all his sincerity and ingenuousness is left bitterly to bewail his transgression. The hour of temptation has been the hour of his inthralment. Many have been led thus to forego the pleasures they once enjoyed in the service of virtue and piety, while the seeds of nobleness within them might have given a luxuriant vegetation. Does the Christian see one thus buffeted in the time of tempest and exposure? it is his duty to lend him the saving hand. Though he stray away seven times seventy, the good Shepherd will not forsake, nor leave him to the prowling wolves.

Despair not, O my soul! though the hour of temptation be one of storm, the sky be blackened with its menacing gloom, the billows toss thee as a feather over the yielding, yawning deep; fear not! for thy dawn is nigh—the darkness disperses, the star of promised deliverance

that guided the Wise Men of the East beams from heaven—the Master of the tempest lulls the rent passions, and all is peace. There rises from the calm bosom the gentle song—

“Peace, troubled soul!”

August 16, 1843.

THE AUTUMNAL SCENES OF NATURE.

ALREADY the chilly winds of November are changing to the cold, freezing blasts of December, and old Winter gives us a very feeling prelude to his after-piece. In the midst of this crowded, bustling city, I have thought of the disparity of the season from that which rolled over our college-walls at M——. Seasons! what are they amid these lofty brick palaces, where the only view of nature is a bright round spot of blue above, and at night, a single constellation of light? Just now the piercing cold of winter is felt, the merry sleigh-bells heard, the gathering round the cheering hearth loved; for winter in the city, as elsewhere, makes us love home and kindred more, and draws more closely around the heart the chords of domestic love. But here the glorious periods perform their courses, and man passes with them heedless but of his own comfort, seeking his own pleasure. He views not the grand panorama of creation

whereby his soul might be expanded to comprehend the universe of things and being, and rise upward to the source of light and goodness. Not thus with him who wanders through the great temple of nature—who listens to music in the babbling brook, learns lessons of wisdom in the trees and stones which crowd his path, and everywhere hears the teachings of a great and all-ruling Providence. In the picturesque landscape clothed with the pure mantle of winter, marking the bold outline of the hills and dales as they spread far away in their beauty, he beholds something more than the frosting power of the icy cold. When the fettering sway yields before the mild, transforming influence of Spring; when the fructifying power of the fields and the gardens puts forth its beauty; when the groves are vocal with the harmonies of their inhabitants, and everything joys in returning life, does he not feel something higher than a sort of indifferent pleasure?

When, again, Summer sweeps on in its noon-tide of glory, does he not see the hand of Omnipotence in its gorgeousness and grandeur? His spirit is stirred with noblest impulses; there is a power upon the man far different from that when shut in "the city full" he slumbers away his artificial existence.

Often in pleasant memories I am carried back to the happiness enjoyed in the valley of the Connecticut; especially in the sacred hours of even-

ing, when the glories of an autumnal sunset were gathering about us, and there were pictured on the heart the same gorgeous fancies mirrored on the face of nature. How often have I then cried out with Byron :—

“When the last sunshine of expiring day
In Autumn’s^{*} twilight weeps itself away,
Who hath not felt the softness of the hour
Sink on the heart as dew along the flower?”

Often have I stood upon that glorious old hill, memorable with Indian tradition, when the day-god was sinking to repose, and the crimson hues of his royal glory were poured like a flood along the western sky. What an hour and what a scene! The sombre walls of the University rise in bold relief upon the sky; the beautiful mingling of city and country is spread out upon the hill-side; the waters of the magnificent Connecticut wind their straggling course on to the sea as the child to its parent’s loved embrace; the sprinkling of hamlets and villages just marked far around repose in the dusky twilight; the hills rising backward like a vast amphitheatre, and the range of the Green Mountains advancing in their lofty track far up in the north:—what a scene in such an hour! American scenery scarce has another, and the boasted splendours of Italian skies might vie in vain. Noble thoughts would not be unsuited to this spot. When all things are thus lovely the soul sympathizes with the

^{*} Though the Poet preferred summer.

universal joy; it claps the wings of its immortality and, away from its dull encumbrance, revels in freedom. The breath of life is breathed anew; the things of earth, earthy, seem gross; it mounts aloft and sweetly converses with spirits of pure and celestial climes.

The refining influence of such scenes is wonderful, uniting with the aspirations of a noble soul. Often the proudest ambition is stirred by it to deeds worthy of its daring—intellect roused in its mightiest energy! Often the sweet whisperings of virtuous impulse touch with a spirit's power the perverse chords of the human heart. How beautiful the harmony! The magic charm calms the untamed passions, and lulls the warfare of their tumult. "Heavenly, pensive Contemplation" strikes with her wizard-rod, and, spell-bound, we yield to that deep introspection,

"In which the burden of the mystery
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lighted; that serene and blessed mood
In which we see into the life of things."

Memory, with its fulness of pleasure and frequent anguish, throws around us its enchantments; we cast a limitless gaze into the vista of its remembrances; sport again on the green banks fed by the still waters of childhood-innocence; wander and pluck the bright flowers along the blossoming walks of our young days. How the dreamy phantoms of the relations and joys of those endeared scenes start into things of life!

With lightning-thought we travel the track of ages past, roam the vast ruins of demolished pomp and greatness, call up from the land of shadows the spirits of the mighty dead, and talk of deeds long past. Is not this the power that rests upon the man as he stands in such a place? Often have I felt it, and with feelings too far above the grasp to image forth, too high and heaven-born to be written but on the human heart.

These are some of the sentiments inspired in the bosom at this most delightful hour of the whole year; and autumn is full of such seasons. There is something in it peculiarly fitting to the religious temper of the mind; it utters many voices which direct the soul away from earth. When quite a lad the Spirit of God moved upon me powerfully; and at the Academy among the hills of Massachusetts, while I roved over the woodlands and sauntered among the simplicities of nature, my heart poured itself forth in adoration and blessing to the great Giver. There was more than mere music in the songs of birds, more than mere beauty in the shapes around me, more than mere power in the sights that met my vision: all directed the soul higher; and while soulless nature seemed conscious of its charms, it pointed the admirer from itself to its God, from its worship to the homage of Him who made all things. It is not wonderful that the religious tendencies of the ancients invested every object of nature with a presiding divinity. It was the re-

sult of the weariless searching of the human heart after an object of supreme adoration. It is conscious of its frailty, its dependence, its earth-born and earth-bent carnality. But the glory of our great Deity is his unity. The Greeks numbered as many gods as fountains and groves; the Pantheon of Rome was filled with senseless images, so that the only objection to "the unknown God" was that his claim precluded all others. Our God is one God; his presence pervades all things—the same God controls the elements of the hills, and forests, and streams.

One who, perhaps, of all minds has given most beautiful touches of this mere external admiration, has written these and many more admired lines:—

"There is a pleasure in the pathless wood,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrude,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar."

But far different is this pleasure, and rapture, and society, to the spiritually-minded Christian, from that felt by this gifted author. His were the feelings of a great and noble intellect, but debased by the most ignoble moral conceptions. The Christian rises from out his selfish enjoyment, impelled by the gratitude he feels to the bounteous goodness which has supplied these objects of rejoicing. The one enjoys, but never is mindful of the source of his joy; the other enjoys, but the altar of his heart is burning with the thank-

offering of his purest affection : and this is the sweetest ingredient in the cup of his pleasure,—the most noble breathing of his devotion. Nature and the spirit of the Christian harmonize ; and while the tuneful silence of the works of creation proclaims a Maker's praise, the voice of the saint ascends in song to "the holy hill."

August 17, 1843.

EVENING OF SATURDAY.

Sure they help to weave
Such robes as angels wear ; and thou shalt taste
In their dear, deep, entrancing solitude
Such sweet society, that thou shalt leave
"Signet and staff" as pledges of return.

SIGOURNEY.

SUCH hours are those of Saturday evening, which, from their associations, weave around the heart a new and unwonted interest, making them distinctive from all others in this short life of ours. If Burns, in his "Home of the Cotter," appealed to scenes which the Albanian alone could appreciate, in the chosen hour and the power of interest with which it is invested, the voice of sympathy returns from every breast.

Another week has gone ! Do we feel it ? Is the religious sentiment so pervading and present as it should be at such a time ? The week's message of wisdom or folly is registered in archives beyond our reach ; do we hear our justi-

fication or condemnation? Time glides away with sly and rapid step, bearing our pleasures, our health, our beauty, our honour, our loved ones—he cometh from eternity and goeth thither. Thief-like he comes upon our unwary slumber, and steals away the jewels of our trust. But there is a thought which can be the portion of none but the Christian—he constantly bears *us* nearer our Father's eternal home. What a pitiable condition that of him whose heart is set on the good things of this world! For, though looking on them as they are torn one by one from his affection and enjoyment, he is helpless; or if they remain in their fulness to the last, he is continually approaching the border of his earthly possessions; the final hour of his insane frolic draweth nigher and still nigher! The hours are ministers of good to the Christian as they pass and repass, bringing him news from the heavenly land, and forerunning to herald his coming. Yea, they bear him on the wings of faith and love from affliction, and trouble, and discontent, soon within sight of the everlasting Canaan of his rest and life.

Thus with him weeks pass away, and the close of the week, crowned with toil and loaded with temptation, it may be, comes on him, and he looks undismayed to the final hour when his spirit shall hail in joyful triumph the eternal Sabbath.

January 5, 1844.

LOUIS XVI. OF FRANCE.

THERE is no era of modern history when the great figures of the political drama have been invested with more absorbing interest and deep-abiding instruction than in the short-lived career of the French Revolution. Political experience has been evolved in the history and fate of its great characters that should serve for the safe guidance of the nations.

PROMINENT, by the course of events, stands the character of Louis XVI., which may be studied with profit, not alone by monarchs and rulers, but by the individual of humbler pretension and lowlier life. In the period of his reign were transacted some of the most stirring and momentous events in the history of governments; momentous to the progress of free and liberal principles, stirring the deep of the human heart with all its spirit of innovation and democratic tendencies. There are some developments of the human mind so forcible and peculiar as to strike the notice of every accurate observer. The rapid and almost unconscious strides toward unrestrained, licentious democracy, when the barriers to human fanaticism are broken down by the overbearing of political sentiment; the ease and rapidity with which the more conservative party is undermined and destroyed by the

next succeeding and more powerful innovatists, and the consequent succession of power till mobocracy rules with all its terrible insignia of power,—the necessity of prompt and decisive action to the extermination of the dominion of the principles which overturn the state, and involve it in remediless ruin from popular fury. There are manifest numerous possibilities of stemming its torrent, and preventing the evils which befell the French nation; but in the characters who led its onward march, and the various measures adopted by its opposers, nothing sufficed as a barrier or opposition. Had the king possessed the firmness and dauntless presence of mind, in the midst of his national perplexities, which belonged to Napoleon, the Revolution would have been quashed in its budding. Had the nobles remained firm to their post instead of fleeing as emigrants, but in truth as traitors, and displayed the power before the Constituent Assembly that belonged to them, and even after the organization of that body, the state and the royal prerogatives might yet have been preserved. Had the moderate class of citizens, the middle class, maintained their better principles with the courage with which they proposed them, the bloody and despotic rule of “the people” would never have visited the fair fields of France.

There is in the life of Louis XVI. much that is irresistibly attractive; on the other hand, much

demands censure. He possessed all the qualities of a pacific sovereign that would have gloriously illustrated a throne in the midst of tranquillity and national prosperity. He was a pious king, and paid his devotion to his God, and therein formed a striking contrast to the people of his care and government, whom he loved with parental solicitude, but who consigned his neck to the guillotine. In the very hour of his death, and on the brink of the awful gulf, he could say that no measure had ever received his sanction unintended for the best good of his people. He was the prudent and affectionate father, and in the domestic relations he was the truly devoted head. Nothing but the most virulent prejudice, such as actuated his judges and condemners, nothing but the rankest injustice, can pronounce him lacking those ornaments which would have made resplendent a throne of peace, and amid the loyalty of subjects.

The elements, which at last broke out in fury in the person of the French Revolution, were gathering thickness and gloom through the ages preceding the reign of Louis. The grinding oppression of feudal dominion, the profligacy and extravagance of kings, the gradual growth of liberal sentiments in the breasts of the French people, had engendered those elements, and nothing could long have resisted their power. Louis might have prevented it, but he could not have destroyed; he might have cut off the shoots

just appearing above the surface of social reform, but the roots of the same evils would have remained, ready to spring forth, under genial heat and fostering care, from spirits like La Fayette, Mirabeau, Bailly, and others. In the circumstances of Louis it required the most determined resistance to every encroachment upon the execution : this demanded a resolution, mental intrepidity, and sagacity, which were unpossessed by the king. His trial and death showed him endowed with high personal fortitude, unflinching in the most pressing danger ; but when that danger surrounded the people of his love, and threatened even one head with execution, his mild and peaceable nature shrank from the violence. He yielded to the fatal concession of his dearest privileges, till the populace took the place and insolence of victors, and made demands of the throne as of a conquered and insulted subject. Then the powers by which it might have yet been sustained, were wanting ; and forsaken and powerless in his own weakness, the king sank beneath the repeated blows of his adversaries. It was imbecility in not resisting the tide of popular feeling by wise and resolute policy that ruined the sovereign, and ruined France.

In the death of this monarch there is much that is truly heroic and sublime. He stood the last pillar of this monarchy of ages : the nobility had vanished ; the hierarchy had been torn down in its pride and power ; the several aristocratic

factions had each in turn received their fate at the hands of their insatiably ambitious inferiors, and the king stood alone, in single glory, amid the dominion of an infuriated populace, the taunt and ridicule of those multitudes who, a few years before, bowed the knee of submission and reverence. No wonder that the noise of the military was stilled, and the triumphant shouts of the millions of demons stifled, when the voice of the confessor, with the bold assurance of his mission, addressed the departing Louis upon the scaffold:—"Son of St. Louis, ascend to heaven!" The virtues and repose in God of the royal culprit rendered the prayer not a mockery. It was a scene for the painter's highest genius, yet he could not have comprehended it.

Though we cannot admire his whole character, and must rebuke the voice of panegyric that would gloss the faults of this monarch, still we find much to call forth eulogy, due to but few of the crowned ones of earth. Truly says the historian: "To his historic shrine will come the virtuous and the pious through every succeeding age." His character will be the fitting study of rulers for ages to come: from it they may learn wisdom and prudence, and learn that experience which may prevent the horrors of a repetition of the bloody tragedy which has thus ingloriously stained the annals of the French nation.

January 16, 1844.

CHOICE OF A PROFESSION.

MAN is not the creature of circumstance. It is a horrible hypothesis, unblending with natural or revealed light, that his whole destiny is fashioned by external circumstances—that he must cast himself on the tide of passing events without a rudder to his bark, guided by his own hand, and be borne onward by the torrent whither its swayless waters please. If we consent to this, man is stripped of his glory. It is the full conception fixed in the mind, that the young man must work out his salvation or ruin, that invests life with momentous interests, and imparts to the dim long-*ing* the character of reality. Hence *each* has a part to act in the great drama of this world's history, and filled with this mighty thought we should go forth to the arena of exertion—a part that includes not his own fate alone, but O, how many untold influences upon others! Every one, though unable to throw his power prominently along the track of generations to come, must have inconceivable influence upon minds besides his own.

In the consideration of this subject, there is ever, to the sober mind, a pervading impression of the weakness and ignorance of man, compared with the source of power and the boundless, unexplored regions of knowledge filled by God. This must be the case with those who have devot-

ed a long life and the most distinguished abilities to the investigation of science and to literary research, but especially must it be impressed upon the mind just opening to the influences of life, unsatisfiedly sipping of the unfailing fountains of truth opened for the soul of man. However successfully a man may struggle up the heights of learning, he must ever look on, and his gaze is bounded by higher and still higher peaks. The anxious spirit must be patient till it shall have thrown off these clogs of its present state and put on the shining robes of immortality; then it may plume its flight for those unseen and glorious heights which are crowned with the sunlight of a brightening eternity, where is the throne of Wisdom and Truth. Yet not one upward desire should be struck down. It is said the unfledged aspiration of the youthful mind, in living and in working, should be cherished and trained to development as the tender plant, for it gives promise of the eagle pride of place, his strength and high soaring. Humble as are the powers, meager as are the native resources, these eager impulses, these longing reaches into the future, are not to be despised and slighted. O how feebly do we estimate the power of the will of man! A good God has given us a wide and glorious race-ground, and noblest prizes to reward our victory. What question—retreat or advance—is to be put to the doubting heart? The strong desire, the nerved purpose, are within

—but the field of battle, where does it lie? Yea, more: the storm of conflict is raging—the enlistment is on the side of Truth—but where is the point of attack? where may the strong ranks of the enemy be broken? The young man is considered as having graduated from his Alma Mater, or trained elsewhere than at the university; and whither do his capabilities and predilections lead? is the question which rises upon his mind with startling appearance. The fruit of a handsome education should give a livelihood, but this is not the mere aim of man's creation, the goal of his race. He is not brought into being like the flower, to bloom, be plucked, and cast away. The voice of the immortal spirit speaks in its wakening tones, "Rouse thee, sleeper, to thy destiny!" Who that catches the faint light that penetrates the mysteries of his being, and grasps a conception of his wondrous nature—who that wanders through the chambers of humanity illumined by all the splendour of intellectual power and moral wisdom, roves beyond the boundaries of this finite sphere, communes with the spirits that sit upon the heights of eternity, and looks onward over the termless plains of his deathless life, and feels that this glorious infinite hangs upon this point of time—*can* think that he is "like the dull worm to rot," unheeding and unheeded? And this is the language of all that is true. It is one of the most important principles to be implanted in the purposes of the

young man, to fix his standard high. Nor does this imply an ignoble pride, an unholy vaunting. But while we scorn the low and despicable pursuits of too many, it is well to scrutinize the motives which impel to a high course of action—what influence it is which bears our aspirations upward. What hand is it which is to guide us to our destination? what impulse to sway our decision? *Ambition?* Often does the spirit-wakening voice of ambition's yearning speak vigour to the slumbering energy. Its tones ring in the ear; on, on, in the far future we trace its guiding sound—there is no term, no consummation, no satisfaction to the craving longing, no bower of rest for the weary soul to repose in its toil-worn career. The voice of a Woolsey cries in thunder to our ears: "I charge thee, put away ambition!" We look with disgust on the drunkard-end of the Great Conqueror; the impious spirit of Richelieu speaks a warning; the funeral wail of Ambition in its pride and power is borne on the sea-blasts that howl around the rocky Helena. Is this devouring monster, this mocker of our destinies, to be the guide of our hopes? Though in its pompous pretensions it is seemingly the most worthy of our embrace, it fades away an illusion before the sterner gloom of the grave. Do you choose this master? it points your eye to the summit of power, and joins with the struggling combatants for dominion; it looks over bright fields, and wide-stretched continents, and

myriads of nations, restless till it lords over all. The walls of Acre increase its fury, and the flames of Moscow do not humble. It bends its ear to the siren-voiced gales of applause, intoxicated with the martial notes of fame; the sycophantic crowds bend in homage, the voice of nations is lifted in one united huzza: it is restless—is restless! till it falls spent into the sepulchre. O spurn it as you seek happiness!

Pleasure? The soul of man, how deluded! It quaffs the goblet of pleasure, and every draught increases thirst more and more to a fiery rage—drinks

“—— draughts

That common millions might have quench'd—then dies
Of thirst, because there is no more to drink.”

It wanders away from the loves of home and joins in the debauch, and pollutes itself with faithless desire. The more enjoyment, the more unsatisfied the desires, while the ruin lurks in the gratification as the poison in the sparkling bowl. Poor victim! lured on to self-destruction. Never yet have those whose wealth, and rank, and beauty qualified them to enjoy the fulness of sensual pleasures, found in them the least comfort and consolation when these inestimable blessings were needed. The fate of the Duke of Buckingham, as noted for his devotion to pleasure as he is for his infamy, may serve as the experience of nearly all who have given to this mistress the guidance of their barks over the stormy sea of life. Pope describes his end:—

“ In the worst inn’s worst room, with mat half-hung,
With floor of plaster, and the walls of dung—
Great Villiers lies. Alas! how changed from him;
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim!—
No wit to flatter left of all his store!
No fool to laugh at, which he valued more!
There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
And fame, this lord of useless thousands ends.”

Who would worship such an unbefriending deity?

Or is *wealth* the object in view? Of all the specious aims of the children of men this is the most worthless and thankless. Seek those things which *perish with the using*! Hoard the gold that it may supply a beautiful coffin and splendid winding-sheet! for this is certainly the termination of riches. The pursuit of wealth for wealth’s sake is too sordid for the human mind to look on it with interest. These are the three great ends of merely human action—honour and power—pleasure—wealth. The mind of the young man learns from the experience of others which has been given to him, and from his own few days, that these cannot be the guiding principles of his course of action—they are uncertain, unsubstantial. He searches the round of human incentive, and all around the whispering monitor within points to one great principle, involved in his present peace and eternal felicity, that can only direct in safety his course through the destructive allurements beneath the surface of the waters, whose bosom is peaceful and shining, but whose under-current lashes the

rocks and strikes over the quicksands. It is *obedience to his God*, comprehending both virtue and piety. O, when the glorious truth that this is the safe pilot bursts upon him, and he embraces with full purposes this Saviour of his highest interests, he is a new man! Life changes its aspect and character: now it has become the grand probation for eternity; now there is joyance and buoyancy of heart—the *pearl of great price* is truly found. The emotions gush forth, like newly-opened fountains, in gladsome humour, and they meet and mingle in a common element. But this great discovery brought home to the heart may not be all delight—it calls for sacrifice. It may demand the surrender of friendships most endeared—the loss of a gratification and enjoyment valued as a right eye; it may summon the extremity of strength and moral daring. Yet the resolution is to be as firm, and the sacrifice as devoted as that of Abraham. If these principles be supreme in the young man's heart, wealth, and education, and high rank are valueless in the comparison. It is more prize-worthy than worlds. The multitude seek their happiness in falsity at the hand of the father of lies; but let the young man fling away the unholy spirit that struggles for self-elevation and universal depression, for self-aggrandizement and universal poverty; let him scorn that vile sensuality which enervates to destroy; let the spirit of truth clothed in garments of spotless white

move the springs of action—be the guide of his footsteps; let never-failing, eternal TRUTH be the basis of his exaltation;—then only will his life not be a dream from which he will have to wake to the awful realities of eternal existence.

Thus we have noticed some of the prominent feelings and predominant principles which influence the choice of the young man as he contemplates the momentous future. It is necessary that these great realities should be indelibly impressed upon his mind—there are great purposes attached to his earthly career. Not only does it become him to aim high in his thoughts and aspirations, but he should have an ever-present consciousness of dependence upon superior power, and the necessity of bringing all his own wishes and will into subjection to that superintendence. After this has become the moving power, the discovery of duty and the performance of it are almost spontaneous.

It may be profitable to look at some of the professions which in the present age attract the attention of young men, whose minds have received cultivation, and are expected to perform a good work in their lives. There is that in the character bestowed by the Creator, and which to some extent we have moulded by our lives, which fits us preëminently over other qualifications for some special profession. Here we see the close, critical, analyzing cast of mind that speaks the philosopher; here the particular, the curious, the

practical, that may dive into the mysteries of what are emphatically styled the Sciences of Nature; here the roving, unrestrainable, grasping thought, the mental ear attuned to the harmonies of Nature, and even the discords of the world of Man which generate the poet; here the prying, ingenious intellect of the mechanic; here the smooth-tongued, forecasting, stirring traits of the man of merchandise, the gatherer of gold, &c. But we would not be understood to depreciate exertion and persevering application, which have and may accomplish wonders; and indeed genius is almost useless without labor; still there is throughout the race nothing more marked than that, independently of the transforming power of habit, there exists in the elements of each character something which should shape the engagements of this era of probation. Well would it be for the young man to resolve the inworkings of his own mind, trace its bent, study its aptitude, before he concentrates his powers upon an avocation. Far more would then be accomplished toward the advancement, the political and moral elevation of our degraded humanity. And in the remarks made upon some of what are called (probably by way of eminence) "the learned" professions, we would not disparage those which of humble pretension often do more for the good of man; far from it. Nothing is dishonourable which is useful; and the young man, whether his lot be to toil with his hands and the sweat of his

brow upon matter or upon mind, should realize this.

1. *Medicine.* This honourable profession has been greatly degraded by quackeries, and mistaken notions of the nature and importance of the pursuit. The masters of this empiricism are too often those who enter the college walls merely for a little embellishment and a false name, and graduate prematurely into the "study of medicine." They are too often those whose versatility of genius has *prevented* them from proficiency in other engagements, and look on this practice as lucrative and plenty in recompense for trifling labour. Thus this noble avocation, which should contain some of the most thoroughly learned and valuable men of the community, has been almost monopolized by hirelings. There are comparatively few who have been designed for this calling, so needing the highest skill and peculiar characteristics. No one should enter it who has not a love for those sciences most involved in its practice. Without this love the student can never gain that ardour which almost insures success. It will not be difficult to discern this bent; and though to my ear there comes no siren voice from the tombs, where the Genius of the profession in these days resides, every one must be welcome to this their choice.

2. *Instruction.* The duties and responsibilities, as well as the pleasures and advantages, of the office of the teacher are seldom appreciated. It

is a high and worthy calling to train the budding mind to honour and usefulness. It is difficult for the ambitious youth desiring instant fame to consent to the struggle up the gradations of the teacher's life as presented in this country; it is too often a cheerless prospect. Though public sentiment is becoming enlightened on this subject, and demanding higher qualifications for the instructors of the rising generation, yet it has no one to censure but itself for past faithlessness and unfitness. Education, like all things else, has been carried on by the cheapest and speediest plan, and talent and capability have been too much disregarded. Yet he who is proficient in the preparatives for this profession should demand reward; he deserves it. The truly literary man, who seeks science for the enjoyment of its presence, meets abundant reward; but this can never sustain the material of his nature. To us there seems no pleasanter occupation than the college professor engaged in the fond pursuits of his heart, encompassed by all the aids to research, wandering amid the classic groves of "star-eyed science" herself, communing with the mighty intellects of past ages, and witnessing the assemblage of immortal youth growing in learning and wisdom under his fostering care. What a power of interest, what a magnitude of responsibility gather about such a station! Yet it has its trials. There is one great feature about the practice of teaching in this country which

has an immediate tendency to abase it—the lucrative objects of its masters. There are very many who engage in it for a few years without intending to make it their study as well as profession for life, merely to pay their college bills, or to obtain a few hundreds to form a nucleus in the pursuit of some other permanent profession. However beneficial this may be to the interested teacher, it is not profitable to the still more interested pupil, and has been the occasion of great disorder and disgraceful imposition.

3. *Law.* This is the great theatre of modern ambition. And the profession claims our reverence and profound admiration, for some of the most eminent of earth's sons have shone from this sphere of action; and in our own day there are many noble intellects of all civilized nations engaged in pleading and advising for civil and political light. The law, in its majesty and universality, boasts powerful inducements to the ambitious student. However, its successful practice requires peculiar and transcendent abilities; and in nothing are we more liable to mistake than in our estimation of this profession. Imagining that when with great travail of soul we have brought forth a so-called extemporaneous speech, and are able to produce quite a sensation among an audience, who forget that it has been the dream and conjuration of many an hour, the destiny of a Demosthenes rises before us, the oratory that shall shake thrones and

startle ages by its trumpet-tones; and the youth struts forth in the exultation of the majesty of the law! Hence, how many despicable pettifoggers crowd our country, disgracing the profession! But there is in it something pleasing and alluring to ambitious young men, conscious of ability and power of perseverance. Distinction spreads out her landscapes most gorgeously, and the eminence of the statesman-genius rises in grandeur, whither ascend the applause and admiration of the world. But the law in our country has become almost identified with party strife, and many, who would otherwise be men of probity and trust, have become the slavish tools of party folly. Again, with an increase of number, sound legal knowledge has sadly diminished, in our great cities, and, except in a few instances, at our great courts; yet there are many bright and shining lights. In the midst of so much chicanery and falsity, it is not wonderful that the profession has become so degraded as to be almost proverbially termed knaves; yet there are many truthful and honest lawyers, and there is no necessity in the case wherefore the practitioners of the law should not be patterns of genuine rectitude.

In the notice of these three general learned professions, toward which the attention of the young man is often directed as he looks over the wide field of useful exertion, we have by no means attempted to discuss their comparative

merits, for these are indissolubly associated with the character of the candidate. They may all be made the channels of great good to the human race, and have so been wisely ordered. It is useless for the inexperienced to assert that the doctor must be a quack, the instructor an ignoramus, the lawyer a knave; in each sphere a man may carry out the principles of honour and morality so as to bring much benefit to his race and glory to himself. But there is one other profession—shall I call it?—most important of all; and if the minds of young men were not so generally looking toward it, its magnitude and greatness would impel me to pass it, as best understood without comment.

4. *Ministry.* And by this I mean, not only the study of theology, but the active practice of its truths in the life and preaching. The consideration of young men who have been piously educated dwells more and more on the subject of religion. He looks out upon the elements working in the political and religious world, and “Where may I take my stand?” is the question he puts to himself. I may never live to see strife, or endure struggle; but where may I best exert an influence on the coming age? This is the solemn dream of the life of many a cloistered student. The harvest of the Lord, in this country and foreign lands, seems white for the reaper’s sickle; but how few are the devoted labourers? There is need, pressing need, of loftier action

and invigorated strength among the ranks of the ministers of the gospel; not of those skilled in the languages of antiquity and versed in the sophistic theology of the schools merely, but those men who are willing and bold to *do* in this great undertaking. It is all that can save our land. It needs no disordered fancy to see the principles of political ruin rife in our land, and the shambles of death rising in dread array. What is the conservative influence? what the saving agency? Nothing but the pure and peaceful doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ can be the leaven of life, and the young men of our native land must be armed to the teeth in the panoply of divine grace. With such truths as these it is not strange for the young man to look on the ministry as a great and holy calling. These high duties are not to be measured by the profit and loss we apply to other professions; and there is necessary a higher summons than ambition or earthly good that should call us to this work. It is natural that the heart, trained in the midst of the Church, sheltered by its benign influences, imbued with the spirit of its tenets from the hour when it first opened to surrounding influences, should yearn in interest for the weal of that Church; and the Divine Spirit often moves more gradually and imperceptibly upon such a one than the stubborn and obdurate, at once yielding and melted. It is interesting to trace the feelings of such to their

event. Amid all the holy desires common to those who have taken the Spirit with the name of Christ, it seems as though he can detect something higher; and what can it be? He sits in the great congregation, and the soul hangs on the utterance of the man of God. What earnest longing is stirring within! In the calm and stillness of evening he gazes on the beautiful splendours above, which so feed the virtuous thought, and the scenes and cares of life pass in parade before him. His spirit dreams that the coil of mortal strife dies from the ear in distance—he has mingled in the giddiness and phantom-pursuit of the worldling—ambition has flattered, and allured, and forsaken—pleasure has delighted, and satiated, and is loathed—the world has proved itself a traitor, and life a vanity, and the adieu is about to be spoken. In this waking vision the moon has been spreading its golden radiance along the cloud, but now it rises in boundless majesty, and the soul of the youth rouses to the actual. Yet he is free. In this fetterless era of youth the splendid vista opens: the path he seeks is that which will crown him with eternal glory in the end. Again he asks, What mean all these untold longings and fervent desires? Why is it, that when he turns to the pursuits of life, he leaves them dissatisfied? The great field of ambition's contest opened in the political career of our country, perhaps once a favourite theme, has lost its attractiveness in an-

tipathy; the worthy task of instruction and labour in teaching youth seems confining and inactive; the sublime science of the medicinal art is distasteful;—and whither does his spirit turn? The energy of his nature spurns the vices of indolence—nay it will not rest: ever-active, it must find its home either in virtue or vice. But where is the broadest field for exercise? The confidence of his nature makes no presage, draws no omen from sky or earth; but what is that within which whispers, Destiny—power! and yet directs him heavenward for the fulfilment of his hopes? that tells of vigorous plants which must be cultivated and bear their fruit; and yet that fruit must be righteousness? Why is it that the soul, in its council-chamber, proclaims to all its wondering faculties that it is not bidden to grovel among the herd, but rise in dignity and worth—yet that it must mount upward on the wings of faith and love to the skies, the Spirit must soar to the bosom of its Father? Young man, thou wert born to something higher than the common pursuits of men. These things are not of thy ignoble nature—not of thy earth-born and earth-bent propensity; no—no! they are the secret but ruling inspirations of the breath of life—the Spirit of God.

This is, however, too sacred ground to be thoughtlessly trodden. None should put on its pure vestments till purity is enthroned within, and he hears the voice of a Spirit higher than

worldly aggrandizement urging to the performance of a responsible embassy. The Holy Spirit operates in a special manner upon those whom it designs to stand in the holy place, as the sacred promulgators of the word of life. Any man, with this solemn conviction of the movings of the Holy Spirit, should gird on the sword to fight the battles of his heavenly King, to contend with the powers of darkness, and in the emancipation of humanity from its woful thralldom plant the standard of victory on the ruined empires of error and sin.

Thus we have hastily and imperfectly noticed the principles which should guide the young man in the choice of his profession. There are fields of usefulness enough for all, if they would study themselves and discover the arena for which nature intended them. We cannot agree with one writer who places this second in importance of the acts of a man's life—marriage being first. It takes precedence; and its importance demands a sober and thorough determination. When once fixed, the mind should not vacillate for one moment, but calling to aid all the boldness and decision of its energy, press onward to the highest mark of attainment.

November 24, 1842.

S E R M O N S.

I.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.—JOHN XV, 22.

IF we keep in mind that the discourse of our Lord contained in this and the next following chapter was probably addressed to the disciples at the close of the Last Supper, and on the eve of his betrayal into the hands of his enemies, it is difficult to read it without the most solemn interest. His human presence is just departing. He leaves immense and sacred responsibilities to his co-labourers and servants, who should be the honoured instruments for extending the proffers of gospel grace to their fellow-men. He foresees the obstinacy of his enemies in rejecting his claims, and their fierceness in opposing his truth; therefore he commands his followers, while amid persuasives to return to the faith and worship of the law—"Abide in me, and I in you." He perceives that influences from without would tend to estrangement among themselves, and enjoins—"Love one another, as I have loved you." He is fearful that they would be overcome and driven back by the exceeding great trials and resistances they must encounter,

and he prepares them for these by describing the opposition of "the world;" its vast numbers, its confederate strength, its native hostility to holiness; by charging them to remember always his teaching and example, for "the servant is not greater than this lord;" by pledging himself to send the Comforter to sustain and guide them, who should "testify" of him. Thus assisted, thus armed with power sufficient for every adversary, the disciple is to offer Christ, and still to declare his coming against every excuse for sin. Perhaps he shall receive no less vile treatment than his Master, for he has no less holy and self-denying faith to offer. It is evident that Christ anticipated men would refuse to listen to the word of salvation. But herein we have the secret of their hate, as well as the foundation of their sin: "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." "All these things will they do unto you for my name's sake." So that their dislike would wound Christ through the Christian. Because in Christ's name the disciple is baptized with water; because in heart and character he is baptized with the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of Christ; because in his cause he suffers, and in his presence expects to reign and rejoice evermore, therefore the world hates him. But for "their sin" we also learn there is no excuse. Christ must "come" to fulfil the law and answer the prophecies, to remove blindness and ignorance, "that they which see not

might see," to light up the world by his word and Spirit that it might glorify him as God. Christ must "speak," that the nature and extent and penalty of transgression might be more fully declared, that every impediment to the soul's return might be removed, and the language of every human breath be the confession of guilt. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin;" for, without the manifestation of Christ in the glorious attributes of his mission, the sin of presumptive refusal and faithlessness would not have been superadded, and there might have been some covert for rebellion. But his personal revelation, answering to the promise of former ages, has stripped off every covering, torn away every lying refuge; and now, having had every opportunity to see the demonstration of his Messiahship, to receive and enjoy the blessings of his spiritual kingdom, yet having despised and hated him, and finally cast him out, they stand naked and shelterless in their condemnation before God. "Now they have no cloak for their sin." This is the doctrine of the text.

In considering these words, we shall notice their forcible relation to the Jewish people, to whom our Lord immediately directed them, and close with a plain application of them to ourselves.

I. Christ "came unto his own, and his own received him not." They joined hands, like Pilate

and Herod, to spurn him; to brand him as an impostor filled with the spirit of Beelzebub, the prince of devils; to cry out, "Crucify him! crucify him!" In this refusal, the Jews were without excuse. The circumstances in which he came to them make this evident.

For his sake they had been prospered and exalted nationally. Being preëminently the people of God by choice and by covenant, they were greatly blessed. To them "pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." What lofty privileges these! For more than two thousand years the Israelites were the peculiar object of divine solicitude. Well might David exclaim—"And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel?" God so guided their arms that they were victorious over surrounding enemies. His matchless wisdom is spread out in their government: "Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments; and madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath." His presence dwelt between the cherubim over the mercy-seat, and intercourse was held with Deity. His arm wrought wonders in Egypt that would have made any heart quail but the "hardened" Pharaoh.

He smote the waters for the passage of the flying hosts, and hurled them back over their heaven-daring pursuers. He sprinkled over the plain the bread of heaven, so that "man did eat angels' food." He rent the barrenness of the rock by the gushing stream, and showed that he could "furnish a table in the wilderness." He stayed the sun in his course, and the moon "in the valley of Ajalon," for the slaughter of the five kings of Gibeon. These instances might be greatly multiplied; and the whole history of this people displays the mercy and power of God before the eyes of all nations. He distinguished them above all others in making them the depository of his revealed will, in raising among them lawgivers and prophets "moved by the Holy Ghost." Still, what wonder is all this, when we recall the promise made to the grandfather of Israel—"In thy seed ('which is Christ') shall all the nations of the earth be blessed?" What wonder if the Saviour of the world must be born in "the lineage of David," "of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end?" Although it was with prospect to the revelation of the Christ that the Jews were the tender care of an overruling Providence, even though they prided themselves in this exaltation of divine favour, still they refused to acknowledge and embrace him when he came with indubitable proofs of his title to the spiritual throne. This was an act of the basest ingratitude. Nor were they the less

culpable because the pride of their hearts attached external glory to their hopes of the Messiah's kingdom, for he most clearly manifested that it was not designed to be "of this world." Where can be found language to express the wickedness of such rejection, such contempt for the prolonged kindness of God? Hear the Saviour bitterly exclaim, as, identifying himself with the Jehovah of the Old Testament, he looks over his countless mercies to this people, and weeps over their inexcusable rebellion: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not!* Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." "Now they have no cloak for their sin."

He was the realization of their ancient types, and the end of the law. The express design of the offerings and sacrificial ceremonies of the Levitical institutions was to point to, to prefigure, to prepare the way of Him who should make the one great sacrifice for the sins of the world, and be the "end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." By his one act he abolished the former dispensation: "He taketh away the first that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all." From the time when Abel presented "the firstlings of his

flock with the fat thereof" till four thousand years rolled away, and the cross of Jesus Christ loomed upon the hill of Calvary, the language of every propitiatory shedding of blood had been—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" But their religious ordinances were not the only "shadows of good things to come," for the official characters and eventful lives of their lawgivers, their high-priests, their prophets, their military leaders, their monarchs, were representative and fore-running of that Being to be revealed "when the fulness of the time was come." Everywhere in the typical covenants of antiquity Christ was foreshadowed and held up as the object of spiritual contemplation, and belief, and worship; and the faith of the Jews fully expected a Messiah who should meet these prefigures. So complete is their fulfilment in the offices and history of Christ, that doubt must arise from want of examination. Yet, although in this fulfilment he came crowned with such testimonial of his high mission, such striking evidence of his Messiahship; although he came when the light which had been concentrating for ages "came and stood over" his advent, they refused to believe, and hugged the curses of the law. Could they look on this bright consummation of the purposes of the old dispensation, and have any excuse for their unbelief? "Now they have no cloak for their sin."

In Him were accomplished their cherished prophecies. The vision of prophecy had foretold the nature and sure coming of Christ's kingdom from the first gracious announcement to the serpent concerning the seed of the woman—"It shall bruise thy head," down until the voice of one was heard crying in the wilderness of Judea, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." The representations of his character and reign are sometimes drawn from earthly relations; but the grandeur of his nature and the glory of his works so far transcend anything mortal, or even angelic, that nothing but the grossest arrogance could have led the Jews to suppose his monarchy would be limited to their national aggrandizement. He did not come that he might erect a splendid empire, but that the fearful conquests of Satan might be turned to defeat through the superabounding grace of God, by the expiation of sin, by the renewal of the human soul in the divine likeness, by the rending of the chains of the grave in a new resurrection. The wonderful displays of divine prescience for a series of ages, the clear and definitive predictions of the Being who should effect this great work, incontrovertibly marked the circumstances of his earthly origin, as well as the character of his life and death. They extend to a description of the triumphs of his kingdom till "the mystery of God shall be perfected." Our time forbids an enumeration: some of the most apparent may

be found in Gen. xlix; Psalms xxii, xlviii, lxix, lxxii, xcv; Isa. liii; Dan. ix; &c. Many of these prophecies were directly applied by our Lord and his apostles, while the people must have seen their wonderful truth. They were familiar to the Jews, they were permitted to witness their accomplishment; yet they refused to believe, or to confess their conviction. Though the expectation of the Messiah's coming was then generally prevalent, and every one, conscious that the time was at hand, seemed looking for the sound of some great event, yet they refused to hail this dawning of the Light of the world. Well might Christ exclaim, after he had risen from the dead and gazed upon their perverse unbelief, and prophecy as it clustered around him had proven itself begotten of God—"O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" If his appearance had not sealed the truth uttered by this inspired servant, "that people had not had sin;" but "now" that he has come in humanity arrayed as their spiritual prophet, priest, and king—"now" that he has "spoken to them" the principles of his new covenant, "they have no cloak for their sin."

His works, his teaching, his life and manifested character open to the eyes of the people, proclaimed his authority, and deprived their unbelief of any hiding place. He called on all, as he did on John the Baptist, to see in the wonders he wrought full evidence that he was the

one "who should come." He performed miracles; not in the name of another, like Moses and Joshua, but with all the independent majesty of that omnipotence which commanded, "Let there be light, and there was light!" This divine, unoriginated energy touched the sick, and they were healed; called the dead, and they arose; fed thousands from a few small loaves; hushed the roaring sea to the stillness of the summer lake. His miracles were numerous, varied, and open; witnessed by the people; attested by enemies as well as friends. Notwithstanding Christ spoke in this loud voice—though gathered around as trophies of his miraculous power were the dumb shouting the praises of the Son of God, the deaf listening to his words of grace, even the dead and entombed walking in life—though, in his last and greatest wonder, he grasped the monster Death with his own conquering hand, threw aside the gates of darkness and passed to his throne on high,—yet the people would not believe!

The doctrines of Christ's preaching were such as could have come from heaven only. Nothing else could save the soul of man, and bring peace to the world. Compare them with the highest maxims of heathen morality, and see this truth! He condescended to instruct in a manner suited to man's darkened and restrained condition. Truly did the apostle, who had been thoroughly trained in the wisdom of that age, declare that

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake to our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son from heaven—the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person.” But, while the Jews were privileged to hang upon the lips of that great Being who spoke as never man spake, and receive the gracious wisdom that flowed from him, they refused to believe!

Nor were the virtues of his character less illustrious. He left the enthronement of heavenly glory to redeem a world deserving nothing but eternal curse. He came “to seek and to save that which was lost.” His loving heart yearned for the salvation of blinded, dying souls; his life of sacrifice and beneficence proclaimed him “full of grace and truth.” Still the malice of his enemies discerned “no beauty in him, wherefore they should desire him.” Despite such convincing proofs from the presence of Christ, they gave him to the executioners. It was because they saw all these things with unconvinced hearts, that the condemnation was pronounced upon them: “If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.”

Where could a people find excuse, who would wilfully turn away such a Saviour? Did they not deserve to meet the weight of the wrath

of God, who could reject the herald of mercy and peace, and joyously exclaim, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him?"—who could treat so lightly that bloody agony in the garden; could falsely accuse him at the bar of Pilate; could nail his hands and feet to the cross, and then deride him; could hear unmelted the dying prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?" His blood was shed by those unbelievers for whom he came, and preached, and died. Just was the sentence, "If ye believe not that I am HE, ye shall die in your sins."

II. This is the awful message which is spoken to us also. We have the record of the ministry and suffering of Christ, as well as the proof of his divinity and Messiahship, as fully as the Jews of old. Nor can it be successfully gainsayed. Shall we, then, covet their curse? But if we reject Christ, our unbelief is even more inexcusable than theirs, if it be possible. Must not the consequences be to us more terrible? The history of that people is before us, and in no portion of the world's annals may we find more saving instruction. Their example and fatal mistakes are held up before the unbeliever of the present day in bold, strong outline; and he may shun the rock on which their hopes were wrecked. Additional and powerful arguments are drawn from Christ's death and resurrection, in writings of the holy apostles. Many of these the Lord

himself chiefly presented in parable, and not so fully as those commissioned to preach his gospel after his ascension. This is forced upon the understanding of those now permitted to read the sacred pages. The more collected and steadier light which shines on the divine oracles, from their greater completeness, and the aids of advancing civilization and pious learning, increase our responsibility greatly above that of the Jews. Christ comes, and speaks more emphatically now than he did then.

— A weight of evidence in the text, which ages have given to the truth as it is in Jesus, is presented to us, which the Jews had not. We may watch the rising of this gospel-power from the day when the Holy Ghost was poured out like a tempest, when supernatural gifts were bestowed on the assembled believers, when under the resistless eloquence of the Spirit three thousand were, in one day, added to the Lord. We may see it gathering strength, pushing forward its victory, sharpening its sword by contact with ungodly persecution, breaking the gloom by its scattered light, unveiling foolish idolatries, and holding up error to the scorn of the world. Whosoever looks upon the nature of the weapons of Christianity, which are not carnal, upon the trials and incalculable opposition, and bloody seas through which it has waded, and yet upon its glorious triumphs, must feel that Christ's continual presence has watched over its welfare;

that his voice has been heard above all the elements of a world's discord and ruin, proclaiming salvation and peace. "A little one [has] become a thousand, and a small one a great nation." Where shall unbelief hide its deformity? Who does not see God in this work?

"When He first the work begun,
Small and feeble was his day;
Now the word doth swiftly run,
Now it wins its widening way:
More and more it spreads and grows,
Ever mighty to prevail;
Sin's strongholds it now o'erthrows,
Shakes the trembling gates of hell."

— Wheresoever this gospel prevails, we see men converted to God, vile and blasphemous sinners made new creatures in Christ Jesus, peace, and harmony, and happiness spreading. And we see that these converted souls, so long as they are obedient to the grace given, lead useful and happy lives, and die in the triumphant hope of a blessed immortality. The Jews were permitted to look on physical miracles; but, though their day has passed away with the completion of their design, we behold infinitely greater miracles when Christ comes in the power of his atonement, and speaks to the sin-sick soul, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." How much of this divine energy we have witnessed, and heard from others, and some of us felt in our hearts!

— Yes, Christ comes and speaks to us now ; and if we continue in sin, we do it without any cloak. Precious souls, the influences *now* brought to bear upon you, to draw you from your idols, make you far greater sinners than the ancient Jews. In the day of judgment it shall be “tolerable” for them, compared with the doom of those who now deny the Lord that bought them. If we perish, ours must be a deeper damnation, a more intolerable misery. John says of those days, “The Holy Ghost was not yet given ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified :” but how abundant the gracious efforts of the Spirit now to bring us to our right minds, and make us new creatures in the blood of Jesus ! We feel it so little, because we disobey it so much. O the light, the advantage, the privilege of the present day ! Then the loss of earthly good, the disgrace in the eyes of others, the prospect of a martyr’s death followed the espousal of Christ’s cause. How different our condition ! By as much as your opportunities for salvation excel those of the Jews, by so much is this declaration more awfully applicable to you, “Now they have no cloak for their sin.”

— Professing Christian, above all you are most destitute of excuse for indulgence in sinful practice. “He that committeth sin is of the devil.” . . . “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.” Can you feel that your sins are cast “into the depths of the sea,”—that

your "sins and iniquities" are remembered no more? Let our prayer now be, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Perhaps sin has not dominion over you, and yet you feel yourself not thoroughly cleansed; perhaps you feel as Carvosso describes himself: "My heart appeared to me as a small garden, with a large stump of a tree in it, which had been recently cut down level with the ground, and a little loose earth strewed over it. Seeing something shooting up I did not like, on attempting to pluck it up, I discovered the deadly remains of the carnal mind: and what a work must be done before I could be meet for the inheritance of the saints in light!" What is the message of the gospel?—"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might *destroy* the works of the devil." And if we rest short of this destruction of sin in our hearts, even here, and even now, we have no excuse.

— Sinner, hear the stern and evident truth from the lips of your Saviour: "If I had not come and spoken unto you, you had not had sin: but now ye have no cloak for your sin." Will you be among that strange multitude who remain in unbelief, and continue to reject the Saviour? You may present various apologies,—such as scepticism, the imperfections of professing Christians, a want of feeling, abundance of

earthly cares; but they are nothing but the patchwork of the devil's ingenuity, to blind you, and lead you blindfold to eternal perdition. You have no cloak for your continuance in a refusal of bleeding mercy, and your contest against the striving of the Spirit of God. How often Christ speaks to you, and in how many ways,—warning and entreating; but up to this moment you have cast him off! O do it no more! I beseech you candidly, and in the light of the judgment, to see your position, to look at your danger, your helplessness, while the Spirit operates on your heart, and you may be saved. You have no cloak for your sin against your merciful Saviour; but he is the very one who would throw a mantle of pardon over that sin, and make you as true and holy as if you had never been a rebel. He invites,—he pleads,—he calls loudly by his messenger, by his word, by his Spirit, “Come, for all things are now ready!” O listen! O be constrained! O embrace the offer of forgiveness, and holiness, and heaven; and such a choice you will never repent!

II.

WATCH-NIGHT SERMON.

Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.
1 CHRON. xxix, 15.

THIS season, which joins year to year, ought to arrest the attention, and rivet it on the real character of this life. And the personal interest of each demands that he look at it with calmness and candour. There is unwonted solemnity in the associations clustering about this hour, and which make it distinctive from all others in our short year. If wisely improved,

“They help to weave
Such robes as angels wear.”

We are placed on a higher spot of observation than is common; and while a clear retrospect of the scenes through which we have been hastening is revealed in the light of awakened memory, the clouds and mists resting on the future seem unusually broken. The voice of the past claims instinctive reverence, for it belongs to the history of eternity: it once was ours, but is ours to improve no more. The present is in our grasp but a moment,—the insatiable past lays hold of it almost before we can use it. Then now, while we feel

“’Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
And ask them what report they bore to heaven;”

while we endeavour to estimate duty, the transiency of the present condition, the vanity of earthly dependence, and our hopes for the future, O let us lift up the mighty prayer of united faith to the mercy-seat, that the divine presence may overshadow and awe this assembly; may enlighten and sanctify our hearts; may enable us, standing as we do on the verge of heaven or of hell, so to spend these few hours of time that we may know we have a building of God, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The representation of "our days on the earth," in the text, is very apt and true. Our condition, our possessions, our enjoyments, our very existence here, is shadowy.

1. The shadow is unsubstantial. We run after it, but it flies away; we attempt to grasp it, but find it without substance: so, from our days on the earth we realize no permanent satisfaction. David, the author of our text, knew and felt this truth; and the fact that he uttered it invests it with a clearer light and a heightened interest. Well-stricken in years, filled with the wisdom of long and varied experience, he approaches his earthly end. His youth had been spent in comparative obscurity and poverty, as the shepherd boy of Jesse; but now he departs the greatest monarch that ever sat on the throne of Israel. The people were congregated to celebrate the abdication of David, and the induction

of Solomon, his son, to the regal honours. And though surrounded by the assembled strength of the nation, with a review of such a life as his had been, with the prospect of so great future renown in the magnificent temple to be built, and in the coming glories of the empire, which, under divine blessing, he had so loftily exalted, he embraces these remarkable words: *Our days on the earth are as a shadow*. Surely, if any one might have tasted their substance, it was David; but he told the common experience of mankind. The mind and heart stretch ceaselessly onward for gratification and happiness; yet one day after another closes, and have we neared the goal of our phantom-pursuit? Now we are brought to shake a parting with another year; and is the craving soul more satisfied from the good things of earth than at its commencement? One desire is gratified, and another opens. One power of enjoyment is indulged, and fresh force is gathered for renewed appetite. Thus we feed on the wind—thus we pursue spectres. Man wanders through the wilderness of human pleasures, seeking something to satisfy his soul-hunger, and this world's deceits become the object of his ambitious schemes, and the aim of his action. And then he comes to his grave: It may be, poor fellow, that he is loaded with honour, decked with pleasure, crowned with wealth; but all these flee as shadows before the realities of the world beyond. Satisfying happi-

ness can only be found where the object of affection and trust is commensurate with the want, and capacity, and duration of the enjoyer. If the felicity be partial or transient, it cannot be perfect; it cannot be suited to the eternal and increasing demands of the spiritual desire. Hence, inasmuch as divine authority teaches us that whatsoever springs from, and subsists by its connection with earth, must perish with the end of the material world, the spirit of man must seek apart from wealth, and luxury, and fleshly indulgence, and human parade, for true and perfect happiness, else he tasks in vain all the resources of human invention. If he be the moralist, and follow with scrupulous exactness his obligations to men as men of this world, the end is unreachèd, the soul's duty is unattained. But if he looks higher, and seeks the holy will of that revelation which unfolds vision of superior being; if he pursues the great command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, might, mind, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself," he finds the substance of obedience which shall guide to a blissful reward—he lays hold on enjoyment comprehensive and durable as his immortal nature. Still, it is strange that when God gives to man such ample opportunity to prove the unsatisfying character of earthly things and pursuits, they will be unconvinced. Pitiful and miserable enough must that expectancy be which relies solely on the una-

biding boons of earth: it can have no confident looking toward the future. Indeed, can man suppose that this breath of life, this pittance of activity, can purchase the soul's need? Or, if for such profitless service he might have some claim, is the remuneration to be expected from what must so quickly pass away, and that forever? No! there is no substance: the desires are, after all, an aching void. Without God, man lives "like the rough sea, that cannot rest." But, blessed be God in Christ! the hapless wanderer after rest need not one moment longer seek in vain. We are commissioned to proclaim that the "happy gates of gospel grace" are wide open for the return of the prodigal. The glad tidings of great joy bid you look to Calvary, where the bleeding God-man in his dying struggle beckons—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

2. The shadow is dark. As gloom and darkness are emblematic of trouble and sorrow of heart, so the days of earth are characterized by disappointment and anguish. How dark is earth if the light of heaven is shut out! With desire unfilled, with schemes frustrated, with fortune everywhere, man's days are often dismally rayless. Scarcely a gay scene stretches out in beauty before the vision, but some threatening cloud overcasts and dims it. Scarcely a cup of mingled delight would we quaff, but it is imbittered by some unperceived bitterness. Scarcely

a hope lights its lamp in the depth of the heart, and overspreads the countenance with a flush of joy, but it is extinguished by a rude blast of misfortune. We look down into the caverns of the soul, and behold the cold dark stream flowing over its most treasured delights. Ambition is stirred to deeds of amazing daring and giant exertion, to be stretched in the lone grave, where there is no work nor device. Intellect is roused in its mightiest energy, to be thwarted and cut short on the eve of the greatest discoveries. The whisperings of earthly love touch with a spirit's power the perverse chords of the human heart—how sweet the harmony!—but it dies from the ear like a strain of distant melody in the hush of evening, to leave the heart more solitary and sad. The silent underworkings of the soul utter much more truth than the noisy boasting of this world's pride; and the vanity of human wish, the disappointment of human hope, the fading of human glory, will, unbidden, rush in upon the mind with their darkling truth. History is chiefly the story of human bloodshed, and crime, and change; and the gloom of the feelings, as we wander through the wide record of the desolations of the heart, and read the mockery of storied greatness, resembles the awful silence of the churchyard, with its memorials, and we ask—

“Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour?

What though we wade in wealth or soar in power?

Earth's highest station ends in 'Here he lies!'
And 'Dust to dust' concludes her noblest song!"

Surely, if in this life only we have hope, we must be miserable. If no light gleams from the windows of heaven, man has a dark and comfortless vale to travel; and the shadow deepens as he comes down to the grave. But, out of all the gloominess that surrounds his way like the shade of midnight, the gospel of Jesus Christ would lead him into a path that shineth more and more unto the perfect day of heaven.

3. The shadow is fleeting,—quickly gone. A poet did not say amiss, that there is one word to make us linger—*farewell*! • Yet it is not given to mortals to hug to their bosoms with intensest and clinging enjoyment the things of this loved earth forever. All of this life must pass away. Even to friendship we must give the parting hand, and forsake the dearest companions. The scenes of life flit by, and we can scarce utter *farewell* before they are lost in the far-off past. Our days glide imperceptibly away, and old age, with gray locks and halting decrepitude, surprises by his presence when we thought ourselves in the vigour of youth. Friend, another year has gone; but how long does it seem since the first day of 1845? These recurrences are rapidly numbering our fleeting years, speaking, in tones not to be mistaken, of our frail and perishable nature, marking our passage into

another existence. They tell us that very soon the beams of the morning light will play around our charnel-home, and the shadows of evening will feed the gloom of the despondent heart that weeps over the grave of our mortal remains. Look back—how swiftly time has flown! Call up memory, and sport again amid the green banks and still waters of childish innocence,—once more pluck the bright flowers along the blossoming walks of the days of youth. How the relations and joys of those endeared scenes start into things of life! But those times have passed away, and perhaps some here, whose heads death is wreathing for the grave, look upon them as of yesterday. Travel with lightning-thought the long track of ancient ages,—roam the vast ruins of demolished pomp and greatness,—call from the land of shadows the mighty dead, and talk of world-known deeds: all seem to be transactions of our time, not of eras long since past. Our days are “swifter than a weaver’s shuttle.” This life is “even a vapour that appeareth for a time, and then vanisheth away.” This dusty fabric withers and returns to dust, under the encroachment of time, like a flower of the field after the scythe has stricken it. A short time we are reckless and care-free, in the frolic of childhood; riper years awake to action; soon we totter and fall a ruin into the grave. Earth’s associations are transitory; heaven’s ties only remain unbroken.

Man looks around him,—the fresh, blooming companion that stood by his side in youth, where is she? A father, a mother, a brother, a husband, a wife, is not to be found. A darling child just opened its laughing eyes upon the parent, then sank to its death-sleep. Those gay hearts with whom we mingled in the frolicsome and ambitious schemes of unfolding life have dropped here and there, till they are quite all gone. Friends and neighbours are stricken down on our right and on our left. Races, lately vigorous in all the bustle of mortal life, thoughtless of the future as ourselves, have been swept off. Ages have rolled away, and we read their history. How many voices speak in thunder-tones to man,—enough to startle the universe!—yet he sleeps as quietly as if he had nothing to do but sleep. Why does he not know that death must feel for his heart-strings? Why does he not feel that his own eternal adieu must be spoken? Why does he not see the awful end of his listlessness and neglect? Why does he not hear the sound of coming wrath? Fleeting! Why,—

“Our life as a dream, our time as a stream,
Glides swiftly away,
And the fugitive moment refuses to stay.”

4. The shadow is the representative and significance of some reality; and so our days here are, in some sense, the figure and emblem of

another more substantial being in the future. Thus the law is said to have “a *shadow* of good things *to come*”—the types and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation foreshadowing the more glorious realities of the Christian. The life we now live is the foretold of another existence far higher, and nobler, and more enduring—as in nature the majestic, storm-breasting oak is above its lifeless shadow. Do we not discern in this feeble development of the energies of body, and mind, and heart; in the restless longings of the strange spirit ever unsatisfied; in the unfinished operations of human power; in the untimely sinking of this noble material workmanship into oblivious decay, a token of greater coming destiny? But we could not definitely trace this foreshadow by the light of nature and reason, unless the effulgence of that gospel which brings *life and immortality to light* beamed upon the eternal state, and revealed its true outline. Therefore the saint, conscious of his enrolment among the redeemed from the curse of the law, delights to think of that future which alone can be called uninterruptedly happy, to view earth as the vestibule of the great temple in which he shall worship the God of his salvation through countless ages. But how hard it is to bring men to feel that this life has any connexion with another, and that the present must mark out the future. They live here as if the interests of time would never be merged into those of eternity. This

thought of our constant and all-important connexion with the unseen world should have a guiding and controlling influence upon every action, every wish, every thought of the present life. It should warn us that the wings of every flying hour bear record from us to the eternal world; that we are fitting up a mansion of blessedness or a hovel of misery for our everlasting residence. Still, notwithstanding the striking providences of the Supreme Ruler everywhere around man, the infinite sacrifice of love and glory made to confer upon him heirship to eternal life, he is so mindless of his transient probation—so thoughtless of the past and careless of the future, that these truths fall unheeded and uncared-for on his ear. O, if men would realize how the words and works of their present career are shaping the destiny of a deathless being, this world would present a very different scene from that now extended around us! What a magnitude of responsibility rests on the conduct of the present moment, when we remember that “every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment;” that “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil;” that “the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.” Everything of our present life is written on the imperishable leaves of God’s book, and the light of the other world must reveal the misdeeds of

the sinner in burning letters to the culprit soul. If these things are so—and who will deny them?—why will men surrender themselves to present sin, and forego future bliss, and live year after year regardless of their eternal fate?

Now let me appeal to you all—to my brethren and sisters in Christ—to the ungodly, who are strangers to the joys of knowing sin cancelled and glory begun below. Look over the days of the past year! Have they not been “as a shadow,” without permanent enjoyment from this world; perhaps often shrouded in gloom, vanishing as on the wings of the wind, yet ever pointing to another and more mysterious world? Listen, listen to the knell of the departing year! It came from eternity, and thither it goeth. Its message of wisdom or of folly is registered in archives beyond our reach. What answering voice speaks to the heart? do we hear our justification or condemnation? Here we are met to pay our last tribute to the dying year, to discharge its funeral obsequies. Recount the scenes which it has witnessed in its silent course. We live; but nearly thirty-three hundred thousand human beings in this one year have closed their eyes in death. Some of us may be in ruddy health; but disease has sapped the foundations of many clay tabernacles. Some of us may have had the delights of home unbroken, the fond pursuits of social love richly clustering about our path; but many have watered with their tears

the way to the silent sepulchre, and with heart-rending anguish seen the loved one covered by the clods of the valley. Some of us may rejoice in sweet ties of friendship newly wound around the heart; but many mourn the heart-strings rudely severed, and grieve disconsolately over some absent but still cherished spirit. The year has hailed some smiles of joy, but how many tears of anguish!—some shouts of welcome news, but how many sighs of disappointment, how many groans of fearful pain!—some scenes of peace, and plenty, and happiness; but how many groups of poverty's children, squalidly shivering around the dying embers, as if watching a last solitary earthly comfort!—how many wrecking tempests, and wasting storms, and trembling earthquakes, and stalking pestilences, and gory battle-fields! It has known some feelings too far above the grasp to image forth, too high and heaven-born to be written but on the record above; some deeds of virtue, and philanthropy, and holy sacrifice; but how much narrow and greedy covetousness, how much seeking for sensual pleasures, and gratifying pride, and training ungodly ambition; how much wilful dissipation, and vice, and ruin! Some hearts have yielded to the convictions of heavenly light and power, have submitted to Christ, have rejoiced in redeeming love; but how many have wandered still further from their Father's house! Some bright spirits have gone home in the

chariot of glory, escorted by angels to the paradise on high; but how many miserable souls, chained to the triumphal car of the devil, have been dragged to the depths of woe and despair! But the year is nearly closed: and have we not enough to make us solemn—enough to lead forth our thoughts into eternity? For we must acknowledge that “our days on the earth are as a shadow.”

Professing Christian—I speak to that man or woman whose name stands in the membership of the Church of Christ—turn for one moment and look over your religious course during the last year. What kind of a report can you bring? Can you say, with Paul, “I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith?” Do you feel that by the grace of Christ you have been full of faith and of good works? Has the light of your godly example been undimmed amidst a wicked world? Have you done all you might have done by your money, your influence, your words, your actions, by your forbearance, your meekness, your charity, your sacrifice, for the cause of morality and religion? What are your hopes for the future? Do you even now confidently expect the joys of heaven, because Christ is formed within you; his atonement pardons your guiltiness, his blood washes away your impurity, his Spirit tells you you are born into the kingdom, and made an heir of glory? Have you that steadfast hope which draws you up toward a fairer clime

and happier home, which urges your longings to depart and be with Christ—your wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption—to spread the wings of immortality, and soar away from the dull encumbrances of earth to revel in eternal freedom? And with it have you that sublime resignation to the divine will, and willingness to toil and suffer on, which should mark every Christian? But O! are there not too many waste places in the retrospect? Reckon them. How many class-meetings have you neglected to attend? How many prayer-meetings, while a few have gathered to enjoy the fulfilment of the blessed promises of God? How often have you slothfully failed to call upon your Maker and Saviour in the devotion of the closet; thrice or more times a day? How many idle words have you spoken? How many wicked actions have you performed, which both God and man would frown upon? How many times have you refused to reprove or invite the sinner, when it might have been a word in season for his salvation? How frequently have you forgotten to let your light *so shine* as to lead those around you to glorify the heavenly Father, but have by unchristian tempers and conduct brought reproach upon the cause you have espoused? How often have you degraded the religion of the cross by expending energy and seeking comfort in those things which do not reach beyond time? These queries, and others your own conscience

may propound, I leave you to answer to your God. But it is to be feared there is too dark a catalogue of sinful neglect against most, if not all, of us for the day of judgment. We may well tremble lest we come short of the promised rest. God has been abundant in goodness—why are not our souls lost in wonder, love, and praise? Yet why is not this a good time to repent of past follies, and renew our covenant with God—to start afresh for heaven? Why may we not this night

“Give up ourselves through Jesus’ power,
His name to glorify;
And promise, in this sacred hour,
For God to live and die?”

It is time we had awakened. Our own salvation depends on it. The wants and claims of the sinner demand it. The undying souls rushing into the everlasting burnings call loudly in the ear of every slumberer. Our days are flying like a shadow, and we are working for eternity. O, then, while we lament over past inactivity, let this be the hour when every Christian heart shall resolve to live and labour anew for Christ’s kingdom.

Is there one here who has lived many years a stranger to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world? You are another year nearer your unchanging doom. You see the privileges of your probation must soon be closed. The years roll you onward to the judgment-seat of Christ. The past is gone,

and you cannot retrieve it: yet despondency is not your part. It becomes you to delay the work you have so long deferred not one instant longer. Have you been able during the past year to reform some vices, to minister more fully to your own happiness and that of others around you? Have you maintained a comely morality and an inoffensive walk in the eyes of your fellow-men? My dear friend, stop not here. These things will not be sufficient for you in the death-struggle and the judgment-trial. Grasp at the present opportunity for salvation. Leave the things behind, mournful memorials of your crime as they are, and press onward; forsake the vanities of earth; prepare to meet your God. The goodness of a beneficent Deity has been spurned, his mercies over looked; yet there is a beaming of hope through the darkening of wrath. You may not see the close of another year. Begin it, then, dying sinner, by coming to Jesus. Begin it, prodigal backslider, by coming to Jesus. O, enter the door of mercy before it is shut forever!

I cannot allow this occasion to pass without a word to the young. To you this occasion should be of peculiar interest and importance. Long have I looked with pity and anxiety on the unconverted youth of this town, and with earnest prayer that some one might come forth and lead the way for others to come to Christ. Youth is the time when thoughts are held with strongest tenacity, when feelings are warmest and most

impulsive. The mind is fresh, and impressions from outward circumstances are vivid to the latest hour. The heart is less callous than after a life of sin and struggle against holy influences. It seldom shakes off the bias then received. What season, then, so opportune and appropriate as youth to seek and enjoy religion? None. I love to hear the gray-haired veteran recounting his victories and enjoyments; I love to witness the strength of manhood enlisted under the banner of the cross; but the loveliest sight is youth clothed in the virtues of the gospel, blooming here to be transplanted to a brighter land. Young man!—young woman!—you must have the religion of Jesus Christ, or the pleasures of the world will ruin your soul. Soon youthful scenes and companionships will not so deeply engross your attention, and you must mingle in the strife and passion of worldly action. Youth is apt to deck the perspective with much too flattering beauties. The future, to its inexperienced eye, is often pictured with all the gaudiness of the transient rainbow. But you enter a life fraught with hazard. You may lean on earthly props, but they will prove broken reeds. Nothing but the religion of this Bible, living in the heart, can save you. Notwithstanding all the vagaries of the human mind after something to fill the conscious void, which may prove a guiding power through the turbulence of passion, nothing is sufficient but this. The expe-

rience of all ages, the history of the world, the teaching of your own heart, should instruct you in this truth. Man must seek his glory and the perfection of his nature in the atonement of Christ. Too few will learn this lesson of all time till the privileges of the present are lost in the changeless hereafter. O hear it, young heart, beating high with proud hopes!—This blessed religion only can be a rock-based trust. The high resolve, the ambitious desire, the eager purpose are all vain, and eventually worse than vain, unless resting on and sustained by these holy principles. Otherwise, everything flows from the arrogancy of the carnal mind—all is an idle tale of human conceitedness. Sweet, reigning piety shall give you the sacred and precious privilege of the beloved John, of leaning on a Redeemer's breast. We assure you the world has no enjoyment for youth comparable with the service of God. Do you not intend to reach heaven when that body you so much prize shall become food for worms? but holiness is the connecting link between earth and heaven. Now, ought not this evening's occasion to be improved, while life permits you to make sure work for the world to come? Another year has gone; you have deferred this preparation for about twenty years; may you not at the end of twenty years more, if you live so long, be twenty years further from Christ and hope of heaven? Minutes even are precious treasures to one in the

bloom of youth ; for we know not what one day may bring forth. Advantages over your fellow-creatures have been disregarded ; salvation, when fairly within your reach, has been contemned ; the eye of man has been more feared than the eye of God : but again we hold out to you the word of life. O, be wise to-day ! If we follow many a young man who has refused such an invitation as you now have, if we look for him when his earthly race is run, and earthly destiny fulfilled, we find that, though once the object of pride and trust, he stands on the brink of his last hope, surveying the past of wrong moral constitution, ill-governed motive, misguided action, unsatisfied desire : instead of rising in eagle-flight from the position of his youthful aspiration, his efforts have been baffled and his strength blasted ; and only as the stern destroyer's axe is lifted over him does the repenting struggle of old age come—but comes in nearly every case too late ! We look on the last, dying effort with pity. In this business, my young friend, before you are aware of it, delay will be death. Before the close of this year, resolve to give your heart to Christ. Then a brighter year shall dawn upon you than you ever hailed before. But let me say, also, there is great difference between the dreamings and chaotic imaginings of an evening reverie, and the exalting energy of vigorous action. The gilded musing of the couch will be worse than eventless, unless power be put forth for accom-

plishment; so your faint desires will never waft you to heaven, unless you use the means to get there. Never will it do to sit still with folded arms, dreaming about salvation, but waiting for salvation to come to you. You must show to the world that you are determined to be a follower of Christ, and that you are not ashamed of your leader and his cause. *Now* is the time to resolve and to execute! Quickly the shadow of your days will have passed. Quickly the light of eternity will break around you. This world was not made to satisfy the soul, but we offer to you all, young and old, rich and poor, high and low, the same blessed faith, the same glorious heaven. This world is full of change and sorrow, but in heaven is stability and bliss. In this world there is a mingling of light and shade, life and death, splendour and misery, sunshine and storm, groups of the living and grave-yards of the dead; but, though "the fashion of this world passeth away," we will seek "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Who will go with us?

[The following discourse was delivered in Milford, Conn., after his return from the Stepney Camp-meeting, in reply to the objections raised by many against their noisy meetings.]

III.

These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.—Acts xvii, 6.

THIS was uttered by the enemies of Jesus, and from them is a tribute to the wonders of Christian energy. However apparently strange and exaggerated, it was elicited by the preaching of the true gospel, and the development of its essential principles. (Verses 1–9.)

I. The declaration of the pure doctrine of Christ possesses the same power, and therefore awakens the same hostility now, as formerly among the Jews. In this opposition men may be placed in two classes:—

— The “baser sort,” the flagrantly wicked, have always been banded together as foes of the religion of Jesus of Nazareth; as those who would stand up against its advancing purity and overturning power with such intended vituperation as this: “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.” Nothing else could be expected from gross humanity, since the Spirit of Christ is so adverse to the spirit of the world. The life and death of Christ afford sufficient test of this. Nor can it be pre-

sumed that the servant will enjoy a much better condition, or meet a greatly different fate from that of his Lord, if firm in his adherence. The opprobrium and persecution poured out without stint upon the Saviour, felt in the suffering lives and cruel martyrdom of the zealous apostles, will not be restrained from us. To a greater or less degree this enmity has met every one who has contended for the faith once delivered to the saints: it must oppose us if we confront the man of sin with the boldness and unsparing truth of Paul. These enemies are not careful to be just, either in language or in action: fanaticism, hypocrisy, foolishness, are the garments in which they clothe their effigy of the gospel. The most faithful advocates of pure Christianity are seldom illustrious with the titles of worldly distinction, blazoning and stretching out in battle-array against common ignorance and poverty. They have more generally been loaded with such honourable appellatives as enthusiast, revolutionist; and, at times, within a century, "Methodist" has been a generic name for such characters. Such were the followers of Luther on the Continent, the Puritans in England, the Wesleyans in England and America. But while the vexed hatred of the world at large has thought to make an impassable barrier, it has only pointed the Christian warrior to the weak point of the citadel. While it thought to break the weapons of godly aggression, they have been sent from the

arms of truth with more resistless conviction to the heart. For God "disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise." "There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord."

— Too often the Jews of the modern day, those professing Christians whose pharisaical zeal makes wonderful advocates for all the ceremony of religion, but despises the power of godliness, the vital kingdom of the Messiah in the heart, join with those of the "baser sort" in connivance and contest against the doctrines of the gospel of Christ, when preached by men such as Paul and Silas. Indeed, the baser sort are often, as in the case before us, merely their tools. They may generally be found in every sect. The spread of the saving object of Christ's mission through the power of Paul's preaching, the change of some of the Jews themselves to believe the truth and to consort with the followers of Christ, the conversion of a great multitude of the devout Greeks and many of the chief women, stirred the uproar narrated in the context. And even now, how the descent of the Holy Spirit, in its flaming baptism to seal the truth as it is in Christ, moves the envy, rouses the wrath, brings out the hostile schemes of the opponents of vital Christianity! They may plead loudly for the coming of Christ to reign in the kingdom of the earth, they may consider themselves especially chosen to be the children of the Most High;

but they complain sadly and are struck with alarm if the kingdom of God come with power and glory; if it turn "upside down" the hopes and desires of carnal humanity, till the unjust and evil-eyed views of worldly policy deem all wrong, all misshapen, all confused. "What!" say they, "is that the Church of Christ? It seems more like a dismantled, crazy bark, driving over the billows without chart, or compass, or rudder." Let the pravity and selfishness of the human heart slumber on couches of quiet and security, all will be undisturbed and peaceful; but let the nest of wicked formalities and unholy prejudices be stirred, and they come forth, like so many vipers, to vindicate their right of possession. Let the simplicity of the gospel be garnished by the elegance of rhetorical art, let the truth be spoken in honied accents, if told at all, and the multitudes may throng the synagogue without fear; but if the faithful voice and divine energy of a Paul or a Cephas ring in the ears of the sleeper in Zion, the indignant outcry is instantly raised—"These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." Paul declared truth that swept away every lying refuge of the self-righteous Jew; and it strikes a deadly blow at the unbelief of sinning pretenders to godliness. The gospel as fatally aims at the criminal indifference and formality too generally enthroned in the Churches bearing the name of Christ, as at wickedness in the high places of the world.

II. It is a legitimate consequence that the preaching of the word should be followed by so great commotion and disturbance, that the world should be said to be turned upside down. It will be accounted for and sustained by looking at a few particulars.

— It is authorized by Christ; for in his example he laid the foundation of pious zeal and holy excitement; and he sustained it by his life. It was the spirit of his earthly career; it is the genius of the gospel he has commanded to be proclaimed to the ends of the earth. True religious activity claims him as the spring of its action; he is its originating, impelling, preserving power. Was it not characteristic of his life on the earth? He came not “to send peace on earth,” while ungodliness and wicked lusts prevailed. He came not to lull to rest the fears of man, while dangers so thickly encompassed him, but to awake him to a tumult of action. His blessing will always rest on souls that cry loudly, like the blind Bartimeus, in the consciousness of want and swiftly-passing hope—“Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!” The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, worked with strange and mighty power, at his first descent, and often has he operated with equally wonderful effects on the hearts of men, though the world has condemned them as madness; but is not the gracious Spirit the bequest of Christ? Is it not the mantle which he let fall upon fearing, yet hoping hu-

manity, as she stretched the vision of her faith after his glorious ascension? The Spirit is "to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;" but how can it accomplish this without arousing the world's evil nature, and disturbing its hostile elements? The hearts of the two travellers to the village of Emmaus burned within them while Jesus talked with them by the way, and opened the Scriptures, even though they knew him not as their risen Lord; and the same holy flames will wrap every heart that has communion with Christ—will beam from the life of every one who follows his course of unresting labour for the salvation of souls. Everywhere, of old, the subject-matter was "this Jesus;" yet everywhere the declaration of the truth was attended with signal displays of divine power, insomuch that it extorted from its enemies the tribute to its wonder-working power that it turned a wicked world "upside down." Before the advent, Christ was the point whither the bold and successful John pointed the multitudes who flocked to hear him preach repentance. After the ascension this was the object of the toil, and suffering, and glorying of the apostle to the Gentiles. Christ himself being the broad foundation of trust and hope, the faithful follower, labouring in his name and shouting beneath the shame of his cross, rejoices to behold the conduct of his Master directing and encouraging him in this quenchless ardour and constant

diligence. To Christ, then, this powerful energy looks as its parent and author, as its basis and support. Is not this sufficient authority? By his servant Paul he commands us to be "fervent in spirit;" and shall we refuse to obey, even though the reproach assail us—"These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also?"

— The fact in the text is accounted for in that the blessings which arise from Christ are to be diffused; and this is the object which the preaching of the gospel seeks to accomplish. This purpose must not be lost sight of for one moment, else religious earnestness may run unrestrained in the wild freaks of human speculation and error. "Jesus and the resurrection" were the burden of Paul's preaching,—the topic of all his stirring appeals,—the central point of all his labour. The precious benefits flowing therefrom he sought to spread among the people. Man is dark and ignorant; blinded by sin; unconscious of his lost happiness and degraded estate; unawakened to the fearful ravages of sin, to the awful end of his career of crime and folly, to the necessity and means of salvation. This wondrous influence of Christianity sends forth light to illumine the mind, to teach the ignorance of the understanding, to exhibit to man his perilous condition: and while the radiance from the summit of Calvary reaches far and wide, it attracts man to the cross as the only

origin of hope. But it is not always that man's eyes are opened by soft and pleasant beams, as the day-spring steals more and more upon the darkness of the night; often the fearfulness of his position on the verge of ruin must be revealed by flashes sudden and startling as the lightning. Besides, however unaccountable it may appear, men do not always embrace the truth when their eyes are opened to behold it. They do not apply it to their need, or they are dissuaded from obeying it by some apparently higher present good. Hence, another most difficult object is to bring men to *feel* their obligations to God, the prostration and foulness of their nature; that their weakness and helplessness are coördinate with their pressing need. It wishes to make men realize the unfilled desires, within which is an aching void, for the immortal spirit has nothing substantial on which it may feed. It aims to open vividly the punishments of sin and the rewards of righteousness; to forewarn of the certainty and greatness of the loss of the soul without an Almighty Saviour. Therefore the great immediate object to which the struggling efforts of him who holds forth the word of life, and the cause of heaven, look, is to unfold to the mind the infinite importance of a religion which renews in righteousness; to urge upon the whole man a cordial reception of its pure and blessed doctrines, as set forth by Jesus Christ, and him alone. He is an instru-

ment of God to bring men into willing subjection to the commandments of the Saviour, wherein they shall abhor evil and pursue good, whereby they shall lead holy lives, and reach the inheritance of the saints in light. It is evident, therefore, that the designs of the gospel cannot be carried out without arousing the human heart from its lethargy. It must create an uproar, an upturning in the world. Such has always been the result of the progress of Christianity. "Pure religion and undefiled" is a system of renovating energy: it is not cold and comfortless as an iceberg of the North that may have floated from the shores of Greenland; it is not puling and strengthless, as a little infant in its nurse's arms. With such an end,—the salvation of the soul, the attainment of eternal blessedness,—is it not worthy, yea demanding, of a hearty and bestirring preaching, and labour, and living? So Christ thought. So thought Paul. So must we think. Is it any wonder that such is its transforming power as to cause the wicked to cry out, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also?"

— The interests involved are immeasurably great; and here we have sufficient reason for that supernatural arousal with which the gospel comes to us. Are not the affairs here engaged of infinitely more urgent moment than those of this world? The great question to every one on God's footstool is the salvation or the damnation

of *the soul*; and “what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” If, then, awakening is required for anything, it is to attend to the eternal interests of that soul which must shine as a spirit of light, or inhabit darkness and misery forever. Can you not perceive proof abundant that we must agonize to enter in at the strait gate, and that the value of salvation calls us to it? You may find it in the provisions already made for the work: See it in the vastness and grandeur of the scheme of human redemption, the outlay of boundless love, and wisdom, and power; for can we suppose that we are to do nothing, when God has done so much? See it in the broad application of the gospel, extending its invitation of repentance, and faith, and salvation, to all:—

“Its streams the whole creation reach,
So plenteous is the store;
Enough for all, enough for each,
Enough forever more.”

And in the ineffable delights, the exceeding great reward of the faithful, to which you are pointed. And in the terrible consequences of refusal or neglect of this proffered salvation, which you are besought to shun; the unalleviated pangs of death, the withering curse pronounced at the judgment-seat of the same Being who is now a pleading Saviour, the inconceivable horrors of an endless hell. All these things tell

us that the interests of the gospel are of no trifling character. O how fearfully is the choice at stake with every living man! And it is truly at stake! for days of invitation and opportunities for salvation are vanishing with all the swiftness of the eagle's flight. This is the only moment of probation. Of the morrow, of the next breathing, we cannot boast possession. Yet how great the work to be done for our own souls, and for the souls of others! The longer we delay, the harder, the more stubborn and reluctant must be the heart. The probability of escape lessens every moment. Our time is short! Death may even now be drawing his arrow for the mark; the world grows old, and fades around; the gloom of the grave seems settling over earthly prospects and hopes; the throne of the Judge is about to be set, and the nations of earth to be gathered about it for their doom; the realities of eternity heave in sight! And this is the peril of the soul! Shall we shrink from duty because heedless, pleasure-seeking sinners exclaim against so much excitement? Shall the preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ be frightened from declaring all the counsel of God by the face of fellow-clay? Christians of all names and circumstances have immense responsibilities to meet; and shall the Church of Christ resign herself to sluggishness and indifference? Sometimes, when we talk to men of full and free love, and of the divine willingness to save them, they

stop their ears, and turn their backs, and rush to ruin; but shall we shrink from holding up to their vision the dark scene of coming retribution, already casting its shadow along their path? Did not Jesus himself often do this? Shall we spare the truth? There are terrors beyond, of which the sinner must be warned; and shall we forsake the duty because painful to saint and sinner? The plague is spreading widely among the people, but shall we, like cowards, flee from the danger? Shall we surrender the contest, and allow the enemy to ravage and plunder at will? Men may oppose, and think they oppose us; but shall we not warn them that they fight against their own welfare and happiness—that they are guilty of spiritual suicide? They may persist in their refusal to come to the light; but shall we not follow after their track, and bring them to the fold? What a magnitude of interest is here involved for ourselves, and for all? It is overwhelming! Do we realize it? Is any apology needed for exciting preaching, and exciting labour? Is it any wonder that these interests being pressed upon the conscience by Paul and Silas, the astonished people cried out, “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also?”

III. But, if these are the principles of the gospel, I trust some who have pledged themselves to this great work of turning the world upside down are come “*hither also*.” But the spirit of

this world dreads the approach of the mysterious power of Christianity, whose weapons are not carnal but spiritual, yet so much the more mighty. The temper of man's make has not materially changed since the time of the Jews; nor has this gospel system lost the power and life it then possessed. We preach the same gospel that Paul preached; believe the same truth the people then believed; must escape the same hell and gain the same heaven. Those who profess, and enjoy, and declare the same sacred truths are come hither. Sinner, take care! You must not be surprised if you have to look on the overturning of worldly judgment, so that to you everything shall seem wrong. God works by various instruments. He works in various ways. Often he

“—— Moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.”

Sometimes he comes in stillness, and an atmosphere of heavenly peace surrounds the soul—

“That sacred awe that dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love.”

But it is usually after the storm and tempest have passed that we enjoy the fresh and delightful serenity of nature; thus in spiritual experience, the power of the Spirit frequently comes “like the rushing, mighty wind.” But when God comes into a heart, or into a Church, his powerful presence will be felt. Indeed, there is

more danger to be apprehended from the absence of the Spirit, from formality and lifelessness in our midst, than from what is called by many enthusiasm and excitement. There are extremes; and it might be difficult to tell which is most dangerous—both would be fatal. There may be a false ardour, a gross and sensual enthusiasm, a mistaken devotion. Sometimes an unholy ecstasy may be assumed for faith and its fruits; and there are at times, undoubtedly, hypocrites even in the visible Church. But the love of God and the love of souls need not be mistaken. No, it need not! The blessed witness of the Spirit attesting the truth will give us perfect assurance. And though it kindle the eye, spread a rapture over the countenance, unloose the tongue, so that the saint becomes a witness for Christ, yet that testimony must be felt rather than told. But the power of the religion of Jesus cannot be restrained within; and those of us who will do our full duty as Christians must expect to meet the rebuffs and opposition of worldly-minded men.

— Some of us, my brethren, have felt this overturning power of divine grace. Methodism in its origin in England, and in the spirit it has had to encounter in America, has suffered much of this world's contumely and hatred, because it especially undertook to revive and preach and spread this religion of life and power, that affrights the world and upturns its policy and pleasure. In its progress it has proven itself of

God, and the most virulent opposition of its enemies has not yet brought it to naught. It arose out of disgust and pity at the corrupt formality of the hierarchy; and the same spirit has animated its progress that characterized its first attempt at reform. Excitement! Yes—excitement such as the world had not seen since the days of Paul sprang up under the auspices of such men as Wesley and Asbury, and their co-labourers. Surely it has routed many a nest where formality and hypocrisy had secreted themselves; surely it has spread a purer language and more divine spirit among the people. And what have been the instruments of its energy? Feeble, certainly, so far as man is concerned, but powerful in the hand of God. Preaching has not generally been attended with the efforts of human eloquence, nor sustained by the strong arm of civil power. Yet those sturdy preachers, with the Bible in their heads and hearts for a text-book, with sermons studied on horseback, and arranged by the light of the Spirit, were noble champions of the cross; and their equals are not to be found since the times of the apostles. The Spirit of God has attended the word, and where the divine unction is, there is life and energy; the dead heart is raised to life; new vitality is breathed into the dry bones. I would say nothing inconsistent with the largest and warmest charity; but I feel, my brethren in the Church, that we cannot too highly prize or too

dearly cherish our economy as a system of practical energy. We trust not in a learned or eloquent ministry, (though, if it is given, we will thank God for the gift, if it be correspondingly holy, and pray that we may not worship the minister;) we trust not in splendid churches or vast numbers; we trust not in popular favour or worldly wealth—but rather in those peculiar, unobtrusive means of grace which preserve vital piety and give the Church close intercourse with God. Such are prayer-meetings, love-feasts, class-meetings, band-meetings. These have been sources of great excitement, sources of great spiritual power, as they have been owned from above. Often have the woods resounded with the shouts of the sanctified, with the cries of the struggling, with the prayers of the penitent; and to that hearer who stands aloof and regards the scene with ears and heart that have never become familiar with so many tongues of the Spirit, perhaps supposing he always speaks in a still, small voice, all seems confused and discordant as a place of Babel. But here each heart for itself is casting its all on Christ; here the Spirit is applying the blood of sprinkling to each, washing away the foul stains of sin, loosing the tongue of praise; and for the first time, perhaps, the soul catches a glimpse of heaven. To him whose spirit is attuned, all is harmony. These extravagances, as they are called, may be considered as unnecessary for the work of God in

the heart, and as stains upon the cause of the gospel. Admitting that there are individual exceptions, I have only to say that I fear our Church has lost too many of them. I have often wondered at the inconsistencies of human ways. I have seen men collect in dense masses to listen to some tirade against those in authority, or to an exposition of the aim and character and destiny of some favourite scheme of political government; and if anything pleased the ear or tickled the fancy, up went the loud and repeated hurrah; and a stoical observer might think the madcaps were loose. But these same noisy ones would allow their sensitive nerves to be horribly shocked at the earnest petitions and warm shoutings of a spiritual prayer-meeting, where each soul is melted and baptized by the Spirit of glory and of God, and exults in prospect of eternal life. The world would not rebuke the sound of glee and the merry laugh as they go round the social gathering, not always very much restrained, nor the strife and bustle of business that in the centres of traffic almost deafen the ear; but the warning of the preacher commissioned like Noah almost as a messenger from the judgment-seat to tell of retribution, the rejoicing of the saint, the outbursting hope of heaven, are much too loud, much too intrusive! Just so, probably, the unbelieving Jews and the fellows of the baser sort excelled Paul and Silas in the very turbulence of which they designed to ac-

cuse them. What! rebuke the saint if, when the love of God poured into the soul fills and overflows, when with this happy foretaste he wonders what shall be the full fruition of the promised blessing, he shouts, "Glory to God in the highest?" O, I love to hear a good shout, right from the depth of a heart flaming with a Saviour's love! It seems an echo of the praise of the blood-washen redeemed as they circle around the eternal throne. I love to be in communion with my brethren in warm, hearty prayer and rejoicing; for it seems a foretoken of that blest day when, in the sympathies and triumphs of heaven, we shall change the voice of prayer to sounding praise, and sweep our lyres together in ascriptions to God and the Lamb. How will the heavenly arches ring! We must have our tongues loosed on earth. It has fallen to our lot, my brethren, to mingle among these "shouting Methodists," as they have been denominated. Do you disown such a name as this? Do you not long for some scenes of the olden time, the palmy days, to return? Well, thank God that we have reason for shouting; and if there be reason in it, that ought to please all. You have pledged yourselves with others to turn the world upside down. You have come hither, also, or the life-giving energy has come to you. Now look well to your work.

IV. Notwithstanding the declaration of the text was uttered by the enemies of Christ, and

as derogatory of the character of his cause, we acknowledge it as the aim of Christianity, and believe it must be more literally accomplished than the Jews imagined. The moral world is to be turned upside down. That which has the ascendancy now must yield to the conquering power of Jesus. Such valiant men as Paul and Silas must be multiplied. Man must be awaked from his lethargy; his false trust and hope must be dissipated. It is not the desire of the true-hearted Christian to build up this or that Church, only so far as he believes it will have a subserviency to advance this great work, to save sinners and redeem the world. This is the object of those who have come hither, if they have the true spirit of their Master. In this they can shake hands of fellowship, and co-labour with those of every pure and evangelical sect. We are one in Christ's kingdom on the earth. We are journeying to the same heavenly home. O, my brethren, God gives us the power with others to turn the world upside down! It is blind, and false, and preparing for ruin. It is wrong in its idolatrous spirit, wrong in its wide-spread mammon-worship, wrong in its views of this life and that which is to come. Men do not see the truth, or they hate it when seen. The mighty appliance of the gospel of Christ is the power which must set it right again. It rests on the Rock of Ages, and many mighty instruments have been brought to bear on this lever. God is the great

moving power; he is the unseen, yet almighty influence. But he uses us as instrumentalities, nerves us with his own strength, calls on us to lay hold mightily. How nobly did Paul come up to the work, and all the holy men of that early age! The saints of these times have their hands on this glorious lever, and the work is being accomplished. The world, lying in wickedness, trembles to its centre. The powers of darkness are shaking. Much has already been done. The temples of heathen idolatry have tottered to their fall. The ivy even now mantles the crumbling ruins of many, and the wild beasts of the desert make them a home, and the satyrs dance there. The car of Juggernaut stops in its bloody track. The Hindoo mother stays the hand of destruction from her child. The funeral pyre is to be extinguished. The Brahmin must forsake his foolish worship. Now nation after nation is calling, like the man of Macedonia, "Come over and help us!" Ethiopia stretches out her hands unto God. The isles of the sea begin to clap their hands for joy. O, the work is progressing! The foul usurpation of Satan must give way on its sandy foundation. The dragon-wings of superstition must droop in death. The light of the glory of God shall pierce to the remotest corners of the darkened earth, and all nations shall see it together. The world shall be covered with the salvation of the Lord, as the waters cover the deep. The kingdoms of this

world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. The Christian delights to stand on the elevation of his faith, and listen to the glad sound of universal praise as it rolls the earth around. Man is dead in trespasses and sins, but Christ has written words of eternal hope on the sepulchre of fallen, cursed, dead humanity—"I am the Resurrection and the Life." The world shall yet be redeemed.

It will be seen, therefore, that we plead for excitement; yes, for excitement. And we have little hope for that preaching or that labour which is not attended by it. But it is not the rough, sensual excitement with which the unconverted world is familiar. We wish it produced by the direct operation of the Spirit of God. We wish it of the same nature with that which swells the songs of the blessed spirits above, and fills heaven with glorious triumph. We wish the same excitement which Jesus Christ awakened wherever he went in his earthly sojourn, making sinners tremble and saints rejoice. We wish a responsive joy to that note of victory which goes round the heavenly host when a lost sinner is found and brought home to God. We wish to have some antepast of that delight which shall fill the breast when we have escaped sin, and death, and hell, through the mercy of our great Redeemer. We can better do without excitement in anything, or everything, than in

religion—the saving of the soul, where eternal interests are pressed into a fleeting moment of probation. We must say, with Dr. Young,—

“On such a theme ’t is impious to be calm:
Passion is reason; transport, temper here.”

Let us not forget our work, brethren. Each of us has a duty in helping on this great work of turning this wicked world upside down; nor can we exempt ourselves. We must give up an account of our stewardship to God. Does the world dread our approach? Shall we fear the world because it calls us madmen and fools? Pure religion makes us wise to know the day of our visitation—let us improve it. Live for God with all the life of the Spirit. Fear not to be too active and diligent. Shrink not when the armed bands of worldly hate come on. Stand fast to your colours! Be uniform and consistent; not now full of life, then weary and negligent. If we thus contribute our portion of labour, I trust that in this place we shall soon see the Spirit of God moving upon the hearts of the ungodly.

IV.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.—1 Cor. ii, 2.

UNDOUBTEDLY Paul possessed great original talents, which would have made him eminent in a worldly sphere. At Tarsus and at Jerusalem,

under Gamaliel, he became a master of the literature of Greece, and of the law and traditions of the Jewish people. Nor have we very good reason to suppose he was not eloquent, although he has spoken disparagingly of his powers in this respect. Yet the circumstances of the Corinthians as a polished and learned people, rendered the plainness and simplicity of Paul's preaching a subject of contempt to their refined understandings. The principles and requirements of Christ's doctrine were discordant with their notions of religion, and the feebleness of its preachers, in some essential respects, according to their judgment, presented a strong apparent contrast to their magnificent orators and subtile philosophers: so that the preaching of Christ crucified became a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. Perhaps, however, we shall not be disposed to follow the example of those misjudging Corinthians; and it is important to discover that kind of preaching best adapted to promote the salvation of man; for the gospel is his final refuge. Its preaching is designed to aid in raising him out of his degradation and ruin, to free him from the penalties and wretchedness into which sin has plunged him, and place him again in the favour and blessing of God. If it should be unsuccessful in its effort, in what direction shall we expect greater light and more encouraging promise? Man must be left to grope his way through in-

terminable despair. "For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." We may presume that so distinguished an apostle as Paul, supernaturally commissioned to declare that "to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life," besides being nobly qualified in intellect and heart for the work, and possessing a high and burning conception that this religion must be the world's religion, would offer the provisions for salvation in a manner most fitted to accomplish the wise designs of God in spreading it through the hearts of men. Yet we hear him uttering so strange a resolution as that in the text—*I determined not to know, or make known, (which is the meaning of the original word,) anything among you, whether in word or work, save Jesus Christ and him crucified*; as if this were essential to the faithful discharge of his mission. Two propositions are contained in these words; the one negative, the other positive. Paul determined *not to make known anything besides Jesus Christ and him crucified*; and he determined *to make known Jesus Christ and him crucified*.

I. It will be proper, then, first to consider the knowledge which he discarded. It referred both to the matter and the manner of his communications to this literate and elegant people—to the metaphysical and false reasonings whereby they

thought to arrive at conclusive and correct ideas of God and religious devotion; to the refined oratory and studied flattery with which their great men addressed them, and by which he might presume to present his cause to them with favour and applause. What reasons had Paul for taking this course, for refusing to come with "excellency of speech or of wisdom," which they expected from all who wished to win their esteem and honour?

It is evident, from the tenor of the apostle's epistles, that he considered "the wisdom of this world" as having a different origin and diverse tendency from the principles of the gospel; so that, from its nature and mode of operation, it could not be incorporated with them. Thus he writes to the Colossians: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ." The maxims and active principles of the former are offsprings of man's darkened and evil nature; and if pursued, carry the mind away from true conceptions of the character and will of God. But in the gospel plan we have a gracious revelation of the "wisdom of God," which is unerring in all its developments, holy in all its doctrines, saving in its power. Worldly wisdom, growing out of man's present feelings and pursuits, considers him as he is, obeys the precepts of a perverse generation, is restricted in its schemes to this

temporal scene of action. But divine wisdom teaches the high and glorious condition he may attain, even eternal life, and the path leading thither. And human wisdom can neither increase nor diminish it; it must shine in its own original lustre. Therefore, since this worldly wisdom is contrary to God's system of government, and offensive to his righteousness, it cannot redound to his glory. So it is manifest why Paul refused to come in its boasted power.

It follows that the wisdom of the world is incapable of accomplishing any of the great ends held out in the scheme of human redemption. Since the records of those nations which have had little light from divine revelation, and have followed out to the utmost the attempts of the mind to reach the highest aims of existence, show the inadequacy of man, out of Christ, to solve clearly the mystery of this life, or create confidence concerning the future after death, it may reasonably be concluded that man, if destitute of any light from above, would be totally ignorant of the being and attributes of God, and of the doctrines of his own nature. But the divine nature and will concerning us have been graciously made known; and that mystery into which the first-born sons of light desire to look, which could not have been pierced by human ken, is defined to our understanding. These designs of God in the system of salvation through the sufferings and death of Christ Jesus our Lord,

are to be divulged to a great extent by human agencies. Yet, can the great duties it enjoins, the responsibilities in which it places man to heaven and to earth, the shining promises presented to the eye of faith, be spread out to the mind, or carried out into their effects by any effort of unsanctified humanity? Certainly not. They could not thus be conferred on others and spread through the world. In its unaided exertion, human wisdom is as weak as its native tendency is erring and ruinous. A higher power is demanded, extrinsic of man, to accomplish human redemption. Paul saw this impotency; that it was not consonant with the principles of the gospel; that it was unacquainted with the language of the cross; that it could not effect his object, which was to convert the heart, not win esteem—to teach men their vanity and guilt, not their intrinsic value and power. Still, the thorough cultivation of Paul's intellect and his extraordinary gifts, were probably intended by God to render him more qualified for his mission. But, however gifted by nature or improved by industry a man may be, when transformed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and brought into the work of the ministry, as was Paul, it is not "the wisdom of this world" which you may discern. This wisdom must be made "a new creature;" its evil devotion must be corrected, must be turned into an opposite channel, and flow toward the ocean of infinite love. God is

seen in all its efforts. He is its source, its sanctifier, its controller. If he use it as an instrument, it must be subject to his will. And if he even infuse his own energy into these impotent instrumentalities, even bring the human faculties up into a sphere where they co-work in the gracious design of rescuing a fallen race, it is that he may perfect his power in our weakness; and all the glory of our salvation must be ascribed to his great name.

Hence we do not think it strange that Paul refused the dependencies of earthly wisdom, since they were utterly incompetent to accomplish the objects he had in view; that he would not make known any system devised by its ingenuity, since it had no part or lot in the cause he sustained; that he thought little of that show of man's eloquence and paltry attainment so infinitely inferior in the sight of God to the simplicity of the gospel. At the same time we do not suppose he despised and degraded useful acquirement by the mind of man; but for the advancement of gospel truth it must be swallowed up in "the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ." Philosophy is good in its place; but the gospel is above all, and requires entire subjection to its teachings. "Religion," said Mr. Law once to Mr. Wesley, "is the most plain, simple thing in the world. It is only, 'We love him because he first loved us.' So far as you add philosophy to religion, just so far you spoil

it." Paul would not go to the Corinthians with any praise of their senseless gods and imagined deities; with any erudite and eloquent disquisition upon their favourite theories of belief; with any of that vain rhetoric and trick of oratory with which their demagogues sought for popular adulation. He struck at the faith of both Jew and heathen. He discarded alike the traditional casuistry and hypocritical formality of the Pharisee, the haughty materialism of the Sadducee, the vague and gross speculations of the Grecian teachers, the effeminacy and corruption engendered by the wealth of Corinth. He commanded them all to stand aside, while he held up the pure and perfect doctrine—"Jesus Christ and him crucified." He threw them all into disregard. He had been taught a new system of philosophy. He had studied deeply a new theology—new so far as his attachments were concerned, new so far as the world's acquaintance with it extended. "Jesus Christ and him crucified" formed this faith, this subject of preaching, this style of eloquence, so disagreeable to most of his hearers. He determined to show forth nothing besides this.

II. We secondly consider that which the apostle determined to make known.

a. "*Jesus Christ.*" He did not discourse on the traditions of Judaism, or the dignity of the Jewish people; but he immediately presented this humble being as the end of the law, the answer

of the types, the fulfilment of prophecy, the object of the patriarch's faith and the prophet's desire. He taught no Gentile philosophy; but proclaimed Him who is the power and wisdom of God, in whom are hid all the treasures of knowledge; from whom radiate light and faith, and hope and joy, the central-point and fountain-head of all salvation. How did he declare Jesus Christ?

— As that Being "who is over all, God blessed forever"—infinitely above their foolish and conflicting deities. He declared that, though "equal with God," he "humbled himself," and suffered the death of the cross; yet "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." He set him forth as "The Unknown God," whom they ignorantly worshipped. The Jehovah of the Old, he presents as the same personage with the Lord of the New Testament. He proclaimed Christ as essential God, and as such requiring highest worship. The greatness of the Godhead cannot be grasped by finity, but the coëqual existence of Christ with the Father must be believed and preached. Take this doctrine away, and the visionary fabric of faith vanishes into absurdity. Unless a man believe it

he cannot believe the gospel; unless a man preach it he cannot preach the gospel. Without it the grand system, of which atonement, repentance, justification by faith, regeneration, adoption, entire sanctification, glorification, are principles, is wasted into a refined nothing, a fit chimaera for bewildered imaginations, but which cannot be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

— He made him known distinctively as Jesus Christ—*Christ* as anointed to be our spiritual prophet, priest, and king—*Jesus* as the Saviour of his people from sin and hell. For God out of Christ is a consuming fire to sinful man. The mere knowledge of a God illuminating the mind before shut out from such truth could impart no peace or joy, could in no wise be sufficient for salvation and happiness. On the contrary, to look upon the purity and justice of God, holy in all his nature and administration, must sink the rebellious, sin-stained soul of man into despair, and the most piercing misery. O, it must be a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," when no "Jesus Christ" intervenes to restrain the vengeance against sin, and prolong the mercies of Heaven! Therefore our Lord says to his disciples: "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me;" that is, ye believe in the one living and true God; but the greatness, the splendour, the purity, the power of his attributes, show how

far he is exalted above you, how abhorring must be his view of sin, and give you not one ray of hope. Your hearts are still troubled and disquieted, and there is no voice to say, "Peace, be still!" But believe in me also, bearing your nature, in its humiliation, that I might be your Saviour and Redeemer, wounded for your transgressions and bruised for your iniquities; believe in me also, who will remove the load of guilt that presses you down, light up your prison-house, and break off your fetters, and burst your dungeon door, and bid you go free; believe in me also, who will enable you to go through the world shouting victory in the name of the Lamb slain on Calvary, who opened before you the way to immortality and eternal life, and will make you heirs to an unfading inheritance of blessedness; believe in *me* also, and all your trouble shall flee away as a morning cloud. Therefore Paul preached *Jesus Christ* to man, condemned under the law, a victim of the grave, doomed to eternal death. He made known nothing but this Jesus in the merit and power of his shed blood, as a present Saviour, as a free Saviour, as a full Saviour, as a Saviour for all who believe and use all diligence to "make [their] calling and election sure." He preached him as the Captain of salvation, as the Head of the Church, bestowing upon every spiritual member grace and blessing according to their need; as the Mediator between God and man,

surrounded by the glorious authority of his intercession, standing ready to present the case of the humble suppliant and to show mercy. But while the mediatorial throne endures, and the day of mercy lasts, he places himself at the head of his militant host on earth, and wages unceasing war with the powers of darkness. This is what gives life and strength to its efforts against the threefold enemy. This is what infuses vigour and efficiency into its means and agencies for the advancement of the kingdom of grace. This is what must guide to ultimate conquest. And he will be the Head of the Church triumphant also, and the King of its glory; for this is the "new song" of everlasting praise when the toilsome strife of earth is hushed forever: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests."

— If we follow the example of Paul, then this Jesus Christ is to be the subject-matter of preaching. He is to be presented as God-man, possessing the perfect attributes of Deity, yet condescending to man's nature and low estate, that he might provide a way for his escape from coming wrath. He is to be presented in the grandeur of his character; for there is given "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He is to be presented in the fulness and condescension of his

grace; for "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." He is to be presented as the medium of all the blessed promises of God; for "all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us." He is to be presented in the expiatory power of his sacrifice; "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." He is to be presented in his ability as our advocate and intercessor; for "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." He is to be presented as the support for trial and the aid for duty; for man to be "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." He is to be presented as administering an abundant entrance into everlasting life; for thus he prays: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." He is also to be presented as the final punisher of the wicked; for the "Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance

on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." O, what a subject this for the gospel preacher! It is always faithful; it is always new. And this Jesus Christ must always be preached. That one who does not hold him up in some way, whenever he pleads the cause of his professed Master, can hardly be called a true minister of the new covenant; for there is no department or doctrine in the gospel which should not be exhibited in its relation to Christ.

b. "*Him crucified.*" This is the special revelation in which Paul chose or was commissioned to preach Christ, and in which he must always be made known. "Jesus Christ" was his only theme,—his cross the chiefest point of consideration to man, and the most attractive feature in the system of salvation. He not only threw aside the vanities of earthly wisdom, in urging the claims of his Lord, but he most particularly and earnestly pressed upon the notice that which was a stumbling-block to the proud hopes of the Jews, and foolishness to the estranged imaginations of the Greeks; that which was meanest and most despised in the eye of man, and apparently most unlikely to exalt the kingdom of the Messiah in the earth. Crucifixion is sometimes employed to represent the entire sufferings of Christ; so the apostle may have pointed to

the pain and toil of the Saviour, with his extremest agony, and most ignominious death, as the highest example for the Christian, and the most important subject for the Christian preacher. For "surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;" "he was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth;" "he was cut off from the land of the living," "and poured out his soul unto death," though "he had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth." Whither would you go to illustrate most vividly the undeviating holiness of Deity? To the judgments shown against sin, in the flood that swept off the inhabitants of the old world; in the fire that consumed the cities of the plain; in the engulfing of Korah and his company by the yawning earth; in the displeasure manifested against the Eastern idolatries? To Mount Sinai, where the lightnings flash, and the thunders deeply roll, amid the thick cloud, and the loud trumpet sounds, and the camp of the people trembles? To the verge of hell, and uncover the dismal scene of eternal woe, the undying worm, and the ceaseless smoke, and the quenchless fires, and the wails and gnashing of lost angels and men? No! but to the cross, where the immaculate Son of God suffers "for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;" for nothing less could satisfy divine justice, and here we have the "righteousness of God." Where would you seek for the most

precious revelation of divine love? In the beautiful works of physical creation, and their adaptations; in ourselves, around us, above us; in the mysterious displays of a kind and watchful Providence toward us? No! but at the cross; “for God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Where shall we find the noblest exhibition of divine wisdom? In the skilful contrivances of material mechanism in this world and its thronging inhabitants, or the government which God exercises in nature, or his dealings to the children of men? No! but at the cross, where “mercy and truth are met together—righteousness and peace have kissed each other;” where God may “be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus;” where a righteous God becomes a merciful Redeemer; where Justice and Mercy—yea, all the divine attributes—sweetly combine to free the soul from sin.

“O’er guilt, how mountainous! with outstretch’d arms,
Stern *Justice* and soft-smiling *Love* embrace;
Supporting in full majesty thy throne,
Where seem’d its majesty to need support!

The law is magnified, but the sinner saved.

“’T was great to speak a world from naught—
’T was greater to redeem.”

Here, then, we have the fullest revelation of Deity,—

— “When we view thy strange design
To save rebellious worms,
Where vengeance and compassion join
In their divinest forms:
Here the whole Deity is known,
Nor dares a creature guess
Which of the glories brighter shone,
The justice or the grace.”

The apostle saw it and exclaimed, “We preach Christ crucified, to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” No wonder that Paul proclaimed the cross, notwithstanding its seeming insignificance to the world! It is “Him crucified” that must sound over the mountains and valleys of a world covered and enthralled by the shadow of death. What! is there power in this to break the chains of the captive, to lift the child of sinning man from the horrible pit and miry clay of his degrading iniquity, to set his feet on the Rock of salvation, to put a new song in his mouth, even of praise to the God of his deliverance? Is there anything in so humble a truth as this more glorious than all the discoveries of human research, mighty in the power of God to accomplish what the most gigantic endeavours of man have been unable to reach? Yes; for here we “behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the

sin of the world," and in its sin the source of all its wretchedness. We make him known, then—"him crucified," nailed by his outstretched hands and feet to the rugged cross, pierced by the soldier's spear, and insulted by the mocking multitude, deserted by the friends of earth, but communing with the Father; giving up the ghost, while the veil of the temple was rent and all nature shuddered. We make him known—"him crucified;" for from that bloody cross lifted up before the world, like the brazen serpent in the wilderness, life and healing go forth to all who look and believe. We make him known—"him crucified;" for though he died like a man, he rose like a God; and the shame of the cross he will bear on high before his marshalled hosts as he leads them on to victory, till this bloody banner shall be planted on the battlements of heaven, and his crucifiers of all ages behold him the "Lord of glory."

c. "Jesus Christ and him crucified" is the subject of preaching, the object of faith. Let us embrace it. We look back on its triumphs with delight. Formerly it was attended and attested by miraculous gifts to some extent, and through "the demonstration of the Spirit and of power" it is accompanied by sufficient attestation in the wonders wrought in the human heart and life. This truth, not the skill of the rhetorician, or the power of the orator, has converted sinners, and brought precious souls from "darkness to light,

and from the power of Satan unto God." This made Luther's pen a lever to shake the throne of the Pope. This breathed in the Reformers in England in the eighteenth century. This gave the tremendous power to the early preachers in our own connexion. This truth, flashing from the fire of the Divine Spirit in the heart of him called to plead in the name of Christ, has pierced, and softened, and subdued multitudes of impenitent, reckless sinners. This truth, beginning at Jerusalem, the seat of hostility to its progress, has spread from place to place, from people to people, from continent to continent, and is marching onward to its final triumph. This truth tears away the blindness of man, and pulls down the stronghold of Satan. To it we trust for the conversion of men and the salvation of the world.

Mark the firmness and fearlessness of the apostle: "For *I determined* not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." To this I was fully resolved, whatever might be the consequences. What! Paul—dare you proclaim such despised doctrine as this in the face of the wicked world, in the midst of a learned, and polished, and proud people, far-famed, because its philosophy is so profound, its arts are so highly cultivated, its wealth so immense? Dare you thus incur their hatred, and risk your popularity, your life, your all for this world? We may hear him answer—"Yes! I, Paul, who in time past persecuted to the death,

in my fiery hate, the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, now love that blessed name better than any name, his favour better than the smiles of the world, his cross better than my life; for it has proved the power of God to my salvation, and will prove my support to the uttermost; and I am determined to preach nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, in all the love displayed in his death, in all the power revealed in his resurrection—this shall be my theme, this the lesson of all my labours, till the time of my departure is at hand, that I then may be able to say, ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.’” And that same Spirit which animated Paul filled the timid, shrinking disciples of Christ to declare the same truth, though they subjected themselves to persecution and martyrdom. They approved themselves the servants of God “in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings.” O what strange regeneration! They unfolded the doctrine of “Jesus Christ and him crucified” to kings and potentates, to the high and the noble, to the learned and the haughty—they pressed this truth upon the notice and conviction of all with unremitting zeal and unwavering fidelity: they sealed it with their blood, and their blood cried from the ground till the world listened and

looked on "Him crucified." The same Spirit can make us just such bold soldiers of the cross of Christ. It can make you, fearful, retreating disciple—it can make you an instrument for shaking the pillars of hell, and turning men to God. It gave them of "old such a mouth, and such wisdom, as all their adversaries could not resist;" and thus will it endow you.

III. We conclude with some practical inferences from the principles advanced. A man who preaches "Jesus Christ and him crucified" will not preach himself, nor for his own profit. He seeks not the power, the flattery, the money, the ease of the world. He feels himself to be the servant of Christ; and therefore his language is, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord"—"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Others may provide him that which is required for his comfortable maintenance, for "the labourer is worthy of his hire;" (indeed, it may be true, as I once heard it remarked, that the preacher who seeks money is a thief; and the people who will not support their preacher are highway robbers;) but, whatever the gift from man may be, he does not look on it as the recompense for his labour of love, and expects to receive his reward from none but his Master's own hand. The advantages of this world may be adventitiously be-

stowed, but they are not the subject of his anxiety: he uses them all in his Master's service, and manifests that he aims at glorifying the cross of Christ. This spirit will be exhibited in his preaching. His discourses will not be constructed with an aim at popular favour, at making sure of a good sale of his labours in some ecclesiastical market-place, at attaining some lofty eminence of office and emolument, at being called a great preacher. Perhaps he spends much time in preparing for his pulpit efforts to save souls; and to this we cannot object. The most useful preachers in all ages have been, in some form, devoted students in this part of their calling, and many men fail from a false dependence on the Spirit of God, while they neglect the improvement of talents already given by God. We object not to any *amount* of previous exertion, but to the presence of worldly motives, as inconsistent with the doctrine of the text. He may be learned, attractive in his style of thought and manner of delivery, powerful and sweeping in his imagination, or close and lucid in his argumentative power; but whatever are his characteristics, they have one great single object in view, the making known "Jesus Christ and him crucified." You are scarcely conscious of these external matters in such a preacher, for his great theme absorbs your attention. Gospel eloquence wraps the soul in earnest insight into the plan of salvation; and though the human

endowment may lend power to the message, under the direction of God, you think not so much of the servant as of his Master—not so much of his ability as of the cross. The more fully this is effected, the nearer the preacher comes up to the standard Paul fixed for himself. It very naturally follows that such a true preacher will never be satisfied with the praise of the people. It will not be enough for him that his brethren say, This is good preaching—this is what the people are very much pleased with—this certainly exhibits remarkable talent: you, my dear sir, will make a very good preacher for us. All this, and more too, the devil may have suggested before. He certainly desires the love and warmest esteem of his people, especially of the Church, and prizes sincere tokens of it; but unmeaning compliments must be sickening to the sound-headed and sound-hearted preacher of “Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Yet nothing but the conquering power of divine grace can thus subject vain ambition. As a remarkable instance of this, we may mention the lamented Summerfield, whose name none know but to love. It has been said by those who knew him intimately, that he manifested the most perfect indifference to the applause of the world, and the honour that was gathering about him; that he would peruse the most glowing encomiums upon his eloquence in the leading journals of the day, would receive the most flattering testimonials of

public and private favour, with a smile too heavenly to beam from any heart but that subdued at the foot of the cross. This may be an extreme instance; but O, that is the spot for every ambassador of Christ! He regards it the highest meed of praise when believers are strengthened in faith and increasing in labour, uniting their energies joyfully and promptly with his in every good word and work, pressing vigorously "toward the mark for the prize of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus." If any compliment for his encouragement is given, the true preacher would be much better pleased with one of the same nature with that of Louis XIV. of France to the distinguished Massillon: "Father," said he, "I have heard many fine orators in my chapel, and I have been very much pleased with them; but as for you, when I have heard you, I feel very much displeased with myself!" Again: The subject of Paul's preaching will be the matter and doctrine of his, and he will not lose sight of it in the religious principles he presents. It is to be feared in our own day, as often in ages past, too much of the preaching styled popular savours strongly of "the tradition of men" and the "rudiments of this world." If sufficiently versed in the musty relics of antiquity, it seems as though such preachers had tasted with better relish of Seneca and Plato than of Jesus Christ; or, if this is not the case, it seems as though too many were possessed of

an affection for controversy and speculation that could hardly find objects of regard enough. Is it not to be feared that a taste for this double-refined preaching increases? Sometimes it is not directly opposed to the cardinal principles of the Bible, but it does not hold out "Jesus Christ and him crucified," if it hold him out all, as Paul made him known, and in that power in which he proclaimed him. Many seem to forget that the sole intention of the Christian ministry among men is "to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith which is in me;" and spend their time in evolving metaphysical subtleties, which have as little to do with vital godliness and the salvation of the soul as the theories of chemical affinity. Is this "the foolishness of preaching," and the "wisdom of this world?" Is this the "bread of life," which is "sweeter than honey and the honey-comb," or such "husks" as any grovelling sinner can eat? Is this destined to wake up a slumbering world? Can it point a single sinner to the way of life? Can it achieve the triumphs of redemption? It has been narrated that as the Emperor Constantine, the convert to the Christian faith, was marching against Maxentius, he caught a vision of a cross in the air, and that he saw on it this inscription, "*Hoc vince*"—by this conquer. So should those

who lead on God's elect have continually in the eye of their faith this blessed cross; for nothing else can conquer the heart, the world, the powers of darkness. But is not the lack of this "Jesus Christ and him crucified" in the hearts of many who preach at the present day the cause of so little power in the arm of the pulpit? It is so, my dear brethren. Is our glory as a cross-bearing Church, as a cross-bearing and self-denying ministry, to depart forever? Let our churches become once more the insignificant log-houses; let our more than a million members dwindle away to a feeble minority among the Churches of the land; let our affluence and influence be exchanged for pristine poverty and persecution, rather than give up the principle of Paul's apostleship, and whereby alone we can prove ourselves in the "apostolic succession;" rather than efface from our militant banner before the world, "Jesus Christ and him crucified." But, thank God! those of the right stamp are left yet. And let us pray that the present state of things may not continue, lest the devil have to laugh over mighty triumphs. Would that the number might be enlarged who will adopt the advice of the old Christian. It is related that "a young divine one day asked an old Christian, 'What shall I preach?' He received for answer, 'Preach Christ!' 'O, I have preached him,' said he, 'already!' 'Why, then,' added the sage, 'preach him again—preach him always—preach him

only!’ ” O that God would increase the number of such ambassadors for Christ as will determine, with Paul, to preach nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified to a dying world;—

“Preach him to all, and cry in death,
Behold, behold the Lamb!”

whose gifts, if God has superendowed them, may all be laid on the altar of Christ—who may always hide themselves in the shadow of the cross, and make Christ the object of admiration and praise; that their holy eloquence and sanctified labours may claim the promised presence of Christ, and the abundance of the blessed Spirit!

—— Now who will adopt the language of the apostle, and be determined to know alone “Jesus Christ and him crucified?” God knows that we would preach no other name; we pretend to offer none other in our labours among you. We give you our motto—“Jesus Christ and him crucified.” By this we stand or fall. We care not for the frowns of the world, if God shall set his seal to this truth, and the power of the cross of Christ be felt in our midst. We do not despair of this success, because he has often been pleased to use the most feeble and unworthy instruments for his glory. How many professing Christians here will adopt this language? for no Church can long thrive without keeping alive the spirit of Paul; no Christian can get to heaven without embracing it. “Forasmuch, then, as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh,

arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." Can we, as members of Christ's mystical body, think too highly of this cross-bearing spirit, this supremacy of the cross over every worldly consideration, this sacrifice of everything rather than this fundamental principle of the gospel? How did you begin the Christian race? You denied yourself, took up your cross, and followed Christ; and when you lay down that cross you cease to be a Christian. "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." If you would arrive at heavenly felicity, if you would wear that crown of exceeding glory, you must continually bear the cross of your Master on the earth. It fills the whole way to heaven; you cannot go round it; you cannot advance one step without, in the strength of promised grace, lifting it on your shoulder. If you refuse to do this, you will inevitably go downward again to your vomit and wallowing in the ruin of sin. Now you know what cross lies in your path, which may have hitherto prevented you from enjoying the full liberty of God's children. Heaven will never bless you till you bear that cross. And remember that the difficulty, after all, chiefly exists in your own imagination. For every one finds the words of Christ to be true—"My yoke is easy and my burden is light," if trusting in the strength which he supplies. Let this be the hour when you will resolve to bear every cross to which your gracious Saviour calls

you. How many returning backsliders will adopt this language, and, like the weeping Peter, lament that in refusing to do this they found their fall. O how you should humble yourself for having denied your Lord! But you must return by the way of the cross. May God help you once more to take on you the shame of this cross! How many repenting sinners will adopt this language? How do you look upon it? Is it a stumbling—block to you, as it was to the Jews, or foolishness, as it was to the Greeks? Does it seem too mean and pitiful for your notice? But “there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” You have often heard this preached, and yet you are in the ignorance and exposure of sin. It is to be feared you will not see your error in rejecting this salvation of the humbling cross till too late for remedy. This is your only hope; still you may be further from it this day than ever before in your life. O that proud heart can be subdued! Jesus was crucified for you! That gushing blood flows for you! That dying agony was suffered that he might bear your grief, and carry your sorrow! *Jesus!* does not that name melt your heart? How precious is its sound!

“JESUS!—the Name to sinners dear,—

The Name to sinners given!

It scatters all their guilty fear;

It turns their hell to heaven.”

Whoever you are—however vile your sins
may be—you may here be washed whiter than
snow!

“His blood atoned for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.”

Cannot your faith see him pleading, and waiting
to welcome the returning soul?

“There for me the Saviour stands;
Shows his wounds and spreads his hands!
God is love! I know, I feel;
Jesus weeps, and loves me still.”

O Lord, send down upon us the fire of thy
consecration, that we may be all thine own!

“Bound on the altar of thy cross,
Our old offending nature lies;
Now, for the honor of thy cause,
Come and consume the sacrifice!”

O that every soul might go away from this place,
saying in the firm resolve of the heart, the words
we have sung:—

“Vain, delusive world, adieu,
With all of creature good:
Only Jesus I pursue,
Who bought me with his blood:
All thy pleasures I forego;
I trample on thy wealth and pride;
Only Jesus will I know,
And Jesus crucified.”

V.

It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.—

GALATIANS iv, 18.

THE Galatians had become corrupted in their faith by adhering to Judaizing teachers, and were estranged from the doctrine which Paul delivered as well as from himself. But we shall, for present profit, waive the question which has been disputed by commentators, whether these words were originally intended to apply to Paul himself, or to the cause he advocated. They administered just reproof to that people, but contain also important instruction for the conduct of every one in the cause of Christ.

The worth of zeal cannot be gauged by any particular amount of its exercise alone; but the service in which it is enlisted, the object at which it aims, and the motives which propel it must be considered. And where, in the engagements to which men are devoted, can be found a nobler, a better employment for zeal than that which filled the heart and hands of the apostle to the Gentiles, and the claims of which he so effectually set forth? If we look with the light which revelation gives to reason at the subject of his preaching and labour, all other separate pursuits lose their interest, and "the one thing needful" becomes the *good thing*. Let us, then, consider,

I. Some of the leading characteristics of the zeal involved in Christian duty. It must be directed solely to the glory of God. Though he has deigned to make use of human instrumentalities, yet the cause of the gospel derives its glory and goodness from its being the production of God, and receiving his guidance and smiles. Unless, then, zeal be well directed, so guided as to aim at the divine honour, its designs must be selfish, opposed to the Spirit, and destroying the benefits of redemption through Christ, terribly subversive of all that is good and holy. If it follow any other path than that marked out by the word and Spirit of God, the swifter the progress of the possessor, the more earnest and successful his pursuit, the further he wanders from truth and safety, and the less probability will there be of return. Hence the necessity of starting correctly, and of pursuing the right path for the attainment of our end. Reflection on the frequency with which men fall into one of two errors makes this plain—of being over-zealous in all the externalities of religion, while the things more essentially important are neglected, till zeal, perhaps almost unconsciously to its possessor, becomes superficial and neglectful of everything vital in godliness; or that of rushing inconsiderately and hotly into hostility to some form of faith before the foundation has been examined. This truth may be illustrated by reference to familiar Scriptural examples. The former

misapplication of zeal was severely denounced by Christ in the Pharisees and other surrounding sects. These were often clothed in a zeal which the devotion of the Mohammedan, or the insinuating and destructive activity of the Romish Jesuit could hardly surpass. They were diligent in prayer, in fasting, in sacrificing their substance to supply the wants of others, in efforts to gather within their pale every one around them. And for this object they spared no toil, but "compassed sea and land." Their zeal, however, was not designed to glorify the God whom they professed to serve. They prayed, and fasted, and gave alms to be seen by the world, and that their obedience to the law might be the theme of current gossip. Their exertions, instead of conducing to promote Jehovah's kingdom, to exalt his name in the earth, to spread his dominion over the passions and pursuits of men, rather contributed to their own fame and elevation. Instead of holding up before the people, as the only fit object of worship and praise, the supreme I AM, they presented themselves. The curse of God rested upon them: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." It is no wonder that

their zeal rebounded with terrible vengeance to their own destruction. But Pharisaic is not Christian zeal. The latter goes out beyond itself to its author and inspirer. The Christian loses sight of himself in gazing at the cross of Christ, the Son of God. His heart feels itself exalted only when the cause of Heaven is honoured and extended by the ingathering of precious souls into the fold of love.

In the writer of our text was once embodied a zeal more sincere than that just mentioned, but more openly hostile to that which he deemed false and treacherous. He says, "After the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee;" but he differed from the common character of his brethren in his honesty, and could never be cursed with the epithet "hypocrite!" Educated not only in the learning, but the prejudices of his people, he could not brook the least intrusion upon the proud earthly hopes of his nation; and his subsequent actions show how fully he bent the energies of his nature to extirpate the rising pretensions of the Christian faith. In his heart was kindled a flame which burned its way where-soever he went. Before his conversion, he verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, he breathed out threatening and slaughter against the weak disciples. He stood by in the dark hour of Stephen's martyrdom, and aided and rejoiced in that cruel murder. He solicited from the San-

hedrim authority to persecute the unoffending believers in Damascus, and bring them to Jerusalem to be slain. Surely he brought against the cause of Christ a most indefatigable zeal, conjoined with a daring independence of spirit. But when the divine hand interposed, tore the scales from his eyes, and gave him really to see that the person whom he so rancorously persecuted was in truth the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, look at his example. His conduct speaks a thrilling lesson to every one, especially those newly admitted into the marvellous light of the gospel; for he unhesitatingly inquires, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Now his zeal seeks a channel worthy of his obligation to God. On one hand Saul, in the blazing hatred of his young spirit, is a notable instance of the mischief and ruin which an unholy zeal, untaught of God, misdirected even though sincere, may accomplish in its results upon man. On the other, Paul, in the benevolence and charity of his converted soul, in the earnest labour and sleepless diligence of his ministry and apostleship, must stand throughout all ages as a living memorial of the blessed fruits to the human race of an unquenched zeal, sanctified by divine grace, and aiming at the divine glory. While, then, in our own day also we see around us honest hearts deluded into strange error and wild fanaticism, let us be careful in adopting theories and acquiring prejudices. While, also,

many rest in the mere illumination of their understandings, and are content with going about to establish their own righteousness, let us be deeply imbued with a sense of the poverty and unrighteousness of our works if separated from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; and let all tributes of our toil and activity be laid at the feet of our redeeming God. Let our hearts be right with him, that their fruits in our lives may glorify him. This is the basis of true Christian zeal; and let us beware of building on an unsubstantial foundation. Christian zeal is characterized by a spirit of love. Mr. Wesley calls it *burning* love. The Persians, under a beautiful figure, make fire the symbol of love; and surely the great and philanthropic efforts to which men are sometimes actuated, seem the manifestation of struggling *fire* in the heart. But the sum and substance of our holy religion is love; and when the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost's fire descends into the soul, it is inflamed with the purest love to God and to man. Scarcely anything could more adequately convey the essential character of Christ's earthly labours and his early disciples. This ardent charity must begin at home, must spring from well-regulated desires and dispositions in our own hearts; for we cannot love God without hating sin, and we cannot fully comprehend our relations to our fellow-men, and exercise gospel love toward them, till we become the children of God. Nor, on the

other hand, can we love God without loving our neighbour; for "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" So that these walk hand in hand. It follows, therefore, that we cannot have gospel zeal for the removal of others' iniquity and misery, till conscious of our own faultiness, and striving to forsake sin so displeasing to Deity. Our first care must be concerning our own souls—to pluck out the beam from our own eye. Every unholy desire, every forbidden purpose, every darling indulgence must be brought out and slain on the altar of God, in spite of any clamorous opposition. When diligence is thus given to make our own election sure, zeal may go forth with joyful success to the relief of others, to strike the manacles from those in the most grinding of all servitude. Taught by a thorough knowledge of our own weakness and want, it will more easily apprehend as well as more ably minister to those of others around us. Gushing forth from the warm affections of our own hearts as they are ruled by divine love, it will reach and alleviate the necessity of our neighbour through its natural diffusive sympathy. Yearning over those for whom Christ has died, not with the good will of a mere worldly courtesy, but with a Saviour's love shed abroad in the heart, it may stretch out a hand of power for the deliverance of the endangered.

If we are born of God, and controlled in our motive and desire by his Spirit, we shall do all that lieth in us for the good of the bodies and souls of men. Nor can the energy thus stirred within by viewing the want and wretchedness of man be restrained from being seen and felt, any more than the giant throes of the mountain fire; but its streams never can wither and destroy.

— This zeal is also constant. A goodly zealous heart is “always” affected for the interests of Christ’s kingdom. And though great caution is needed here, yet by this it may often be distinguished from that strange, unholy enthusiasm which arises from disorderly passion, or that eagerness which runs with Christianity in the utmost apparent affection so long as power, or place, or honour, or pleasure accompany, but deserts it immediately on a reverse of fortune. Holy zeal finds in Christ its source and guide; and he was “zealously affected *always*” in the good cause he came from heaven to advance. The changes of earthly fortune made no change in his steadfastness. It will be nothing wondrous if we espouse the form of godliness, and go through the round of required external duty, if this course should be for our present interest, if our path lead through smooth and flowery fields. But dare we climb the rugged steep, and scale the mountain peak? Dare we do a deed for Christ if we knew that a father or

mother or sister would be arrayed against us for it; or if we knew that earthly possessions must be sacrificed for its accomplishment? Dare we be bold witnesses for what we have seen and felt, though we meet the taunt and even the virulent persecution of the ungodly, trusting our Master in the midst of it all? Shame on that pretender to the spirit of Christian faith, who should love such a pseudo-gospel as never commands—Deny thyself, take up thy cross, follow the lowly, the rejected, the crucified Nazarene!

“I ask not if you feel

The warm excitement of that party zeal,
Which follows on while others lead the way,
And makes His cause the fashion of the day;
But do you love him when his garb is mean,
Nor shrink to let your fellowship be seen?”

The zealous Christian is not a coward, to be frightened from his post by every apparent danger. His light is not like a meteor, flashing and radiant for a moment, then expiring. Nor is it like a comet, now rushing up the sky to astound and affright, then vanishing to a sightless distance. It rather resembles the luminary of night, shining always in borrowed beams, serenely beautiful even amidst clouds and tempests, often in its heavenly track veiled in the Sun of Righteousness. It is conspicuous in the midst of worldly prosperity and good; nor can hatred, reproach, adversity dim it—nay, the darkness more fully reveals its brilliance. It is

distinguished, however great the splendour of wealth and station around it. It is steady and persevering in its onward, upward course. It is on the alert in calm and apparent security, as in storm and buffeting. It is unmasked before the broad gaze of the world, as well as in the solitude and secrecy of the closet. The zeal possessed of this constancy will discharge every duty divinely imposed. It will not select those of least inconvenience and pain to ourselves, nor those which may attract notice and win admiration from man. It is always wakeful to discern the eye of a Judge fixed upon it, who takes account of all we do or purpose; and the same sincerity and power characterize the smallest and most retired duties which appertain to the greatest and most public. Thus continuing in all duty at all times, as the light and sufficient aid of the Spirit are given, it endures unto the end.

II. The necessity for this zeal.

—— God claims it of us. As our Creator, who has breathed life into our nostrils, who has kindled within the powers of our understanding, who has bestowed so many kind and generous impulses combining for our happiness, and thus ushered us into a glorious being, he demands it. As our preserver, sustaining our lives and proping our natures when they would fall into the grave, lavishing such untold and unmerited bounties, he demands it. As our Saviour, who

forgot us not in our wilful apostasy and shameful degradation, but looked on us with boundless love, and surrendered himself to redeem a lost world by the price of the blood of the only-begotten Son, he demands it. For, can we in the possibility of our limited action render to him more than is due? After a life of unremitted toil and sacrifice, and of perfect obedience from the hour of our conversion, so far as it went, would we not be called on to acknowledge ourselves unprofitable servants, in making a recompense for the divine love and labour in our behalf? Can we too fully repay these endowments? Is it not becoming, then, that soul and body be given to the Lord? Ought not the understanding to leave those vain speculations, which allure to infatuate and destroy, and seek first of all to know the command of God? Ought not the affections to centre in him, and receive from his nature their pure life and holy action? Ought not the will to lay hold, in divine strength, with stern and unflinching resolve upon every sacred duty? Ought not the hands, feet, and every corporeal power to be in the service, and ready to do the bidding of the Spirit of God working in our hearts? O, can man undergo too much toil and hardship, endure too much sacrifice and suffering for such a Being? If God speak, how can man refuse to listen? If God command, where in the wide universe can man find a reason for disobedience? Our fel-

low-men claim it. A Christian cannot be at ease, while such multitudes as we daily see around us are perishing in sin. If the love of God be in him, he will love his brother, and labour for his salvation. He must perceive the fearful state of sinners, proclaiming their crime in the noontide of gospel light, and glorying in their shame. He sees men everywhere who are in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity; who turn their backs upon the house of God, and prefer the haunts of wicked revelry; who never open the Book of books to attain wisdom "unto salvation, which is by faith in Jesus Christ;" who never present to God an offering of gratitude, or the supplication of a broken and contrite heart, but employ his name for the most awful malediction; who pretend to be wise and sober-minded, while they delight in the frolic of children or the fantasies of the maniac, though the weight of the wrath of God abides upon them, and they stand on the very verge of the bottomless pit. This dread pageant of sin may be continually passing before the eyes of the Christian; and shall he never lift his voice to persuade men to forsake it? He may be linked with sinners in all the relations of life; and shall he never exhort and beseech them to flee the coming wrath? It is incumbent on us, in season and out of season, in every possible way, to care for the souls of others, and labour to prevent their eternal torment. The world

lying in the power of the wicked one requires this at our hands; and if we refuse to be thus zealous, how dwelleth the love of God in us? "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." Our personal interest calls for it. For the life of a Christian is a constant warfare. There is no neutral ground; he is in a hostile territory, and everywhere finds a lurking foe. Continual watchfulness is required. If he sleeps, he should

"Sleep as on the battle-field,
Girded—grasping sword and shield."

He is a warrior, enlisted for a deadlier and more momentous strife than he who meets his foe on the battle-plain amid the rush of hosts, the roar of the cannon, the groans of the dying, the red glare of iron death. His is a mighty endeavour for the conquest of self; and, if successful, he "is better than he that taketh a city." His is a struggle between the destinies of eternity: it is a warfare against the powers of darkness. It is not easy to pluck out the right eye, to lop off the right arm, to renounce corruptions that have become ourselves and parts of our being; yet this must be done before we can be clothed in the garments of unfading light. It is not easy to withstand the arch enemy, when he comes in the terrors of the lion to devour, or in the subtle garb of an angel of light to insinuate his way to the heart and administer the poison of death; but we must do it, or be dragged to his infernal den. It is not easy to pass in indiffer-

ence the pleasure and wealth and pomp of the world, to rebuke its blasphemy and exclaim against its sin, to dare to stand out in singularity of purpose while others point at us the finger of derision; yet this must be done if we would stand erect and unabashed in the presence of our Judge, when revilers are speechless and condemned. We can never be successful in this spiritual conflict, never come off victorious through Him that loved us, unless over all our armour we have this cloak of holy zeal.

Brethren, shall we not at this time resolve to be more zealous for God? Not because these broken hints are of any worth, but because of the greatness of our duties, the transiency of our probation, the scenes of the swiftly-approaching judgment, the changeless hereafter. Nothing within the wide range of human investigation and concern comes with such preëminence of value and influence, such duration of destiny and reward, as the service of Christ. The religion of the gospel is above all things, absorbs all things. If it be anything, it must be everything in our esteem. If it demand our talent, it demands the employment of all that God has bestowed. In the hoarding of gold, in the pursuit of ambitious objects, in the contests of earthly care, we bring to bear all the zeal of our nature. But how is it in this over-all and in-all matter of saving the soul? In earthly affairs, our feel-

ing is most ardent and our action most stirring when the object to be attained is close at hand, and the time of labour is brief; then we strain every nerve, and put forth every exertion, to prevent disappointment of the desired end. But how is it in the service of God, in the preparation for heaven? What have we? A day? an hour? a moment? No! the present breath we inhale is all our assurance; and for such a work! God help us to lay hold with vigour! O let us pray for the Spirit of burning, that our hearts may be inflamed with that love for the cause of God which shall never rest in its conversion of men from the error of their way! Let us go forth with wrestling supplication at the mercy-seat, with affectionate entreaty and exhortation to those with whom we commune in life. Let us be careful, in our words and actions, to be clothed with a holy life, that we may speak instruction to the sinner's heart he cannot shut out. Blessed is the man who lets the light placed within by the Spirit of God, so shine around as to lead others to glorify the heavenly Father. And shall we not, when the solemn, thoughtful twilight of setting existence gathers about us, look back, with a poignancy of regret now inconceivable, upon our heartless neglect and indifference? Our best-esteemed actions, in themselves, claim no merit; yet, through the plenitude of divine grace, the smallest act in his service is remembered and will not lose its reward. If, then, we

shall be permitted to stand on the plains of light above, where saints differ as the stars in their glory, and to look on the inheritance reserved for the faithful, think you not we shall wonder that the truth of divine promise did not on earth more fully come to the heart and impel the action? "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." "The wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." How cold and thoughtless have we been amid our awful responsibilities! It is time to arise and shake ourselves from the dust. Who will not say, with Bramwell, "O for a noble ambition to obtain one of the first seats in glory!" I do not desire the dimmest crown in the heavenly kingdom; but I must be more faithful! I desire a seat very near my Saviour; but O, I must follow hard after his footsteps here!

And what shall I say to you, sinner, regardless of the things that make for your peace? Why will you be so zealous in those scenes which must soon pass away, but never take decisive thought for another world? Have you never yet learned that the fashion of this world passeth away? Do you not think it time to turn your steps, and with your whole heart seek and serve the Lord? "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall

give thee light." "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain (for the danger admits of no delay): escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." O, you may be saved! Hear it! May the Holy Spirit show it to you! you may *now* be saved! Then "seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

VI.

I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.—1 TIM. ii, 8.

II. THE efficacy of this prayer. We are naturally led to inquire the reason of this injunction, and the objects at which it aims. If God enjoins upon us an act, and attaches to it certain blessings, will he not fulfil his promise in their bestowment?

1. Wherein consists the efficacy of prayer? It has been said that since everything has been foreëstablished in the council-chamber of Heaven, the prayer of feeble man cannot affect the will of God, nor change his dealing. But, though God has undoubtedly preordained many things with all absoluteness, yet there are many

things in his moral government which must be in their execution conditional. He has implanted in these bodies souls; he has endued those souls with free moral agency. It is perfectly consistent with the changeless perfectness of the divine nature to preordain many events which shall depend for their fulfilment upon the action of these untrammelled powers of human nature. Thus, in Holy Scriptures, we often read of God's changing the course of his dispensation, or repenting, or turning, in answer to the petitions of faithful servants; though, in the consideration of terms used, we should be careful to dissociate them from the corrupt meaning, which the vileness and defection of man may commonly throw around them. But the true perfection of the Godhead is not impeached by a non-adherence to "*purposes*," which are ordered to depend on the conduct of the free-agent man, while the great "*principles*" of his moral administration are inviolate. Indeed, this is so, because "*an immutable adherence to the principles of a wise, just, and gracious government requires it.*" (Vide Watson's Inst., vol. ii, p. 492.) PRAYER is one of these conditional actions of man's agency, on which the divine ordinances often depend. It lays not an impious hand upon the *principles*, it shakes not these grand pillars of God's government; but, if we may dependently so speak, the prayer of the penitent jailer swayed the purposes of Heaven. How numberless are the in-

stances recorded for our instruction! God is changeless in his principle, but his purpose—and through his own infinitely great dispensation—may be controlled by the supplication of so unworthy a creature! He has seen fit, in the glorious provisions of his grace, to bestow much in answer to prayer, which would be withheld in the neglect of its exercise. But here we must be careful to shun an error, if we would not have our faith wrecked. Prayer does not work in us as an agent to effect any holy preparation for the reception of divine benefits, or as possessing any intrinsic power to improve the moral condition of a sinning heart. This would render it efficient for our regeneration and holiness, without higher aid; which work can only be carried on by the Holy Ghost as the gift of Christ. Far be from us the doctrine that anything which impotent, foolish, dependent man can unaidedly perform, will work out his salvation. No; the fitness for receiving heavenly blessings rather consists in our deep, engrossing, overwhelming sense of want and absolute destitution. But the direct operation of the Holy Spirit can alone produce this consciousness; hence the will and the power to pray. Prayer, then, thus being merely the expression of need, is a *condition* rather than an *agency*. It becomes merely the application of a famishing soul to infinite resources for relief, knowing that if sought rightly the supply of its necessities shall

be furnished. The inworking grace of God uses our prayers not as instrumentalities, but as unavoidable conditions laid down by all-perfect wisdom. So that this important truth, that the Divine Spirit shows to us our want, inclines to supplication, disposes and qualifies to receive implored mercies, must breathe in every conception, must manifest itself in every expression of true petition to the Almighty Throne. This is the only ground of assurance that "he will regard the prayer of the destitute."

We are led on in our search for the foundational reason for such an institution. We look into the nature of things. It preserves in the mind a continual sense of his sovereignty, and of our constant dependence upon his bounty; and thus brings the proud and the lowly to a common level before God. It cultivates a grateful heart; for human action has made it proverbial that in receiving without personal seeking and labour, we are mostly destitute of deep-felt thankfulness. It fosters a spirit of devotion and worship, keeping alive repentance and humility and confidence toward God by constantly referring thought and action to his will. It surrounds the domestic associations with a more hallowed influence and stronger bond; permeates the relations of society, giving to conscience a healthy action, and exalting religion to its legitimate supremacy. But while we regard these incidental influences growing out of the relations and feel-

ings of man, which prayer is efficacious in exerting under the gracious working of the Holy Spirit, we cannot after all scan the inscrutable will of God. The requirement is made—to pray; but the highest question that a created dependent can ask is this—Is it *the will* of my Creator, my Benefactor? Instead of endeavouring to fathom the designs of infinite wisdom, let us seek the knowledge of God's command; then joyfully run in the way of his commandments. In God “we live, and move, and have our being;” from him we receive “every good and perfect gift;” and he has clear right indissolubly to connect this worship with our spiritual welfare. This he has done. It is frequently enjoined by Holy Writ as a most imperative and solemn duty. “Watch ye therefore,” &c. Luke xxi, 36. “Men ought always,” &c. Luke xviii, 1. “In everything by prayer,” &c. Phil. iv, 6. Herein, then, we may find the efficacy of prayer; as it is the command of God. To it is affixed his seal, and his word is unalterably sure. HE WILLS that we *pray*—for what? For the relief of our necessity. Need we seek further? Will not he who imposes this sacred duty, regard our petitions and fulfil his *pledges* in answer to prayer? “I will, therefore, that men pray;” not because it is an empty sound and vain formality, but the way to blessing. We are commanded to “ask,” but the blessed promise *follows* the request—“*It shall be given*

you." We have the fullest and most precious promises that prayer shall be efficacious. "Draw nigh to God," &c. James iv, 8. "Call upon me," &c. Psa. l, 15. "Then shalt thou call," &c. Isa. lviii, 9. "The same Lord over all," &c. Rom. x, 12. "And all things whatsoever," &c. Matt. xxi, 22. Numerous are the passages of the same import, encouraging us to come with bold confidence to "the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,"—grace that provides atonement for past sin, that fills up the measure of present necessity—grace to purge away all uncleanness, to root out bitterness, to drive away temptation, to console in affliction, to gird up the loins for every good word and work.

2. The question of the efficacy of prayer becomes one of experience. Look over the records of sacred history, as it is illuminated and exemplified in the lives of great numbers of all ages. Elias prayed that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years. At the place Penuel, Jacob wrestled in earnest prayer till he had power with God, and received the blessing. Moses was prostrate before the Lord forty days and forty nights, and the destruction threatened to Israel was averted. Often he stood up between the righteous judgment of God and the wickedness of the people. When he held up his hands, Israel prevailed over the alien armies; when he let them fall, Amalek was victor.

Joshua could command, in the name of God, the sun and moon in their courses. Did not God listen to the petition of the faithful Hannah? David, and Solomon, and Hezekiah, and Nehemiah, experienced signal and singular manifestations of divine presence in answer to prayer. The windows of Daniel's chamber were open toward Jerusalem, and "he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God;" so that he was unhurt even in the den of lions. The three Hebrew youths had the presence of the Son of God in the flames of the furnace. The Lord gave wisdom to Jeremiah in the purchase of the field of Hanameel. The repentant Jonah prayed unto the Lord from the captivity of the fish's belly, and was delivered. The holy Cornelius "prayed to God always," and an angel was sent to assure him that his prayer came up "for a memorial before God." Stephen, when in the midst of his awful death, "looked up steadfastly into heaven," and, filled with the Holy Ghost, caught a view of the heavenly world, and "Jesus standing on the right hand of God;" he prayed for his murderers, and "fell asleep" upon his bed of stones. Peter was imprisoned, but the Church was fervently praying for him, when suddenly he came into their midst, rescued by an angel from heaven. The followers of Christ were gathered together in one place, pouring out their supplication with one accord, when "the place was shaken

where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Paul and Silas, while offering prayer and singing praise in the dungeon, were miraculously, at midnight, delivered from prison; and the jailer with his family were delivered from their sins. Paul knew the efficacy of prayer when he was permitted to *glory* in tribulation; when he endured the extremest privation and suffering for the honour of the cross of Christ; when he was borne to the third heaven, and heard things unlawful for man to utter. What holy testimonies are these! By it the martyred saints were upborne and comforted in the midst of malignant persecution; so that when chained to the stake, and the fiery fagots were piled round up to their necks, they have "endured to the end," and been able, like Huss, to scorn with holy courage the abjuration of their faith: "No," said he, "I never preached any doctrine of an evil tendency; and what I taught with my lips I seal with my blood!"—and his prayer and triumphant farewell song were heard above the crackle of the flames and the shouts of the rabble. We have seen the efficacy of prayer eminently beaming from the lives of the good and holy. As the saint must be conspicuous for holiness, so he must be remarkable for prayer. May we not appeal to your own hearts? Did not God answer that struggling supplication of yours, offered in the simplicity, and humility, and

broken-heartedness of the publican, "*God be merciful to me a sinner?*" Has he not listened to your petitions for other perishing souls, broken and bruised by the weight of sin, gathered around this altar? The power of prayer! What wonders has it accomplished! What deliverances has it wrought out for man! It has turned the tide of nature, and wrought out miracles for the rescue and happiness of nations and individuals. Considered as the medium of intercourse between man and God, how potent must it be!

III. The universality of the exercise of prayer. "I will, therefore, that men pray *everywhere*." If such be the excellency of its character, in the cultivation of so many pure and holy virtues; if such be its power, to bring, as the condition of blessing, so great and numerous gifts within our reach, no injunction can be more important, more reasonable. It springs from our unceasing want and entire dependence upon God. If we consider that there is no instant nor condition, during our continuance on earth, but we need the help of God—sinful, and needing atonement—weak, and wanting strength—unsatisfied, and requiring unremitted supplies—surrounded by spiritual dangers, and with the eye of God's judgment watching us, and therefore needing safeguard and sanctifying grace—it is no marvel that we are required to be "in the fear of the Lord all the day long," to "pray without ceasing," to "pray everywhere."

1. There is no particular condition or situation of life in which this command is inapplicable.

Where and when shall we pray? In the solitude of the closet let prayer be poured out with that inspiring confidence and unrestrained freedom which should spring from full consciousness of God's omniscience and readiness to bless.

When amid the sweet associations and responsibilities of the family circle, let prayer ascend for the sanctification of domestic trial and enjoyment. Let it be heard when the band of Christian hearts gather together for the welfare of some single object,—the revival of the Church,—the spread of the gospel,—or for mutual comfort. When the great congregation are assembled together in one place, let prayer arise like a cloud of incense,—for mercy to the guilty,—for rejoicing to the sorrowful,—for the diffusion of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit.

Where shall we pray? If the guilt of sin is felt in its horrible nature, and feared in its eternal blight, if the curse of the law threaten you, go to PRAYER! Cry to God! At the mercy-seat you may have a view of the "Word made flesh," "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." There you may see him in divine glory and power, graciously offering pardon, and beseeching you to come to him, that you may have life. *When shall we pray?* When corruption needs to be mortified, and faith confirmed, and love inflamed, and fears

scattered, and the entire man stirred to diligence and zeal. *When shall we pray?* When the dark hour of temptation gathers around in its menacing gloom, the enemy comes in like a flood, the tempest of passion sweeps us like a feather over the billowy sea, and the yielding, yawning deep seems about to engulf you,—fear not!—lift up the heart in prayer to God! In that instant the darkness shall disappear; the Master of the tempest speaks, and its rage is subdued; the soul reposes in calmness on the bosom of its Redeemer! *When shall we pray?* When the world scoffs, and arraigns at the bar of its impious trial; when persecution for righteousness' sake thickens around us; when the weight of the cross sinks our feeble nature almost to the ground; when the furnace of persecution is heated “seven times more hot than it is wont to be heated;” when the prospect of dissolution terrifies, and we dread rather than “desire to depart, and be with Christ;”—then let loose the heart in PRAYER, and we shall be able to stand in the evil hour, yea, to come off triumphant in the struggle! *When shall we pray?* When some one of those linked to us in the dear relations of life, or associated with us in its labour, or near us in its walks, quenches the kindlings of the Spirit, refuses the offer of salvation,—throw around that one the hallowing influences of your prayers. They shall prevail in his behalf; they shall bring to bear upon that

heart the operations of the Spirit, till they convict, and soften, and humble at the foot of the cross of Christ! How often have the prayers of a mother come to the wayward youth in guilty scenes, in the carnage and wounds of the battle, in the terrific thunder-storm! How much do we owe to the prayers of pious parents! *When shall we pray?* Never should we enter upon any important duty or undertaking in life, nor pass into the engagements of business, without seeking counsel and guidance from above; never should we mingle in worldly companionship without having girded on this faithful armour. How many a repented word, and temper, and deed might thus be saved! *When shall we pray?* When danger hangs over the nation; when the laws are trampled on; when conscience languishes; when morality is enfeebled, and virtue prostrated;—then should PRAYER be offered for the aversion of divine wrath. God is better pleased with this worship of the heart than the sacrifice of hecatombs. *When shall we pray?* Jesus spent forty days and forty nights in prayerful retreat and communion with Him who had sent him, and whose will it was his business on earth to fulfil. *When shall we pray?* Jesus prayed as the first ray of light stole in on the morning, and in the stillness of departing day. He “continued all night in prayer to God.” *When shall we pray?* Jesus prayed when the scrutinizing, hating multitude crowded around

him, and in the far-off loneliness of his solitude. *When shall we pray?* Jesus prayed amid the sacredness and worship of the synagogue, and while the bustling traffic of the market-place was around him. *When shall we pray?* Jesus prayed alike when the outbeamings of his divine majesty so awed and astonished the multitudes that they would adulate and honour him, and when they despised and maltreated him; when they spit upon him; when they cried out, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" *When shall we pray?* Jesus prayed in the sorrow and heaviness of Gethsemane, when he embraced the cold, pitiless earth to exalt humanity to heaven,—“O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” *When shall we pray?* Jesus prayed in the hour of last and deepest suffering, inflicted by his enemies. Under the agonies of the cross, he cries, “Father, forgive them, for they know not WHAT they do!” Here is our model!

2. This is a sweeping declaration, that places no limit: “I will that men pray *everywhere*.” It was a belief of the Jews that no prayer could be effectual unless ascending from the temple at Jerusalem. Afterward the suffrage was extended throughout Palestine, till, when the nation became dispersed throughout all lands, oracles were erected, from which prayer might be acceptably offered. Some have thought the

Saviour wished to strike a blow at this exclusive bigotry: "For where two or three," &c. Matt. xviii, 20. This is most beautifully and comprehensively unfolded in the great code of Christian perfection, written to the Thessalonians: "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thess. v, 17. Though more faithfully experienced than described, we have here the broad scope of prayer. It is enjoined not only on every occasion of unusual need, and where pious dispositions may be especially cultivated, but it is a praying without intermission or cessation. It becomes the breath of the spiritual life, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and must be respired and sent forth to heaven, its native place, or we must surrender our spiritual being. Its energy must pervade the whole man, and be infused into every portion of his nature. Every wish, every desire, every aspiration of the heart must continually go out in importunate supplication to the Source of good, for still higher acquaintance with the mysteries of divine knowledge, for closer conformity to the image of perfect holiness. At all times, in all seasons, in all places, we must lift up the pure heart to God, without wrath or doubting, till the man becomes pervaded and filled with this *spirit of prayer*. His thoughts and imaginings, his desires and affections, his purposes and hopes, partake of it; and his nature is one living PRAYER, one constantly ascending supplication and thanksgiving. He prays "everywhere."

In conclusion: What unspeakable honour that a suppliant mortal, clothed in "filthy rags," may, with the assurance of faith, approach to the throne of the Infinite Sovereign, and hold intercourse with him in whose presence angel and archangel, cherubim and seraphim, adore and worship! What power, that when he stretches forth the hands of his earnest entreaty, he moves the whole heavenly world!

"Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways;
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry,—Behold, he prays!"

What a blessing that, by this union and communion with God, he receives strength, and light, and happiness!

Brethren, who among us prays everywhere? whose life has this soul of ceaseless prayer? If we possess not this element of Christian perfection, we stop short of our exalted privilege. But this priceless treasure cannot be obtained without continued labour; and shall we refuse to toil for it, when we waste so much time and energy for the acquisition of perishing good? How RICH must he be who has constant direct access to the treasury of all possession! Is there not here one sinning heart, perchance, that never yet truly prayed, who will be attracted to try its efficacy? It has brought wonderful influences upon the heart. It can still do it. O, dependent one, go to prayer!

Let us, afresh, direct our prayers to Him who became poor that he might lavish on us the riches of which the world knows not, that with entire supplication we may spend our sojourn here, till we enter on that blissful state, when the voice that once prayed shall join in ceaseless praise at God's right hand. Amen.

VII.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?—HEB. ii, 3.

ONE chief aim of this epistle, and especially of this first portion of it, is to exhibit the dignity and divinity of Jesus Christ, and to show the superiority in privilege and responsibility of those living under the dispensation of his grace to the condition of all former covenants. So that, if those before us could not escape the due consequences of "transgression and disobedience," the probability is much diminished in our case. If we see that the divine word has been "steadfast," and the condemnation against sins, less flagrant and impious than our own, has been thoroughly executed, we cannot presume that our greater crimes will be exempt from condign punishment. The term *salvation* properly signifies deliverance from danger and evil; and it is here used to represent all that scheme devised by divine wisdom and mercy to deliver man from the present and eternal evils which

have become the inheritance of the sinner, and place him in the everlasting presence of God's favour. In pursuing those thoughts suggested by the text having reference to this salvation, and which are of the highest moment to us, we shall consider:—

I. Wherein consists the greatness of this salvation; for it is represented to be very great—“*so great.*” This may be understood comparatively, in reference to the dimmer light and minor privileges and means of preceding dispensations; or in reference to what man had deserved or could have expected. It is also intrinsically great.

—— It is great as to its revelation. This was at first communicated orally, and therefore became traditionary: yet it spread very widely, and we find the relics of ancient truths among the heterogeneous creeds of most distant heathen nations. But it was given to the Jews in writing, who preserved it in full purity. Thus do we possess it; and we cannot too preciouslly prize the treasure. This is the great legacy to the world. In the Bible the most important system of divine revelation is recorded for our perusal, which is complete in all its parts. The covenants made with man before the Messiah's advent are here viewed in their close and connecting relations to the gospel. Herein is the history of the Redeemer, and the development of his coequal existence with the Father; the story of his acts and sufferings from his incarnation to his final

ascension ; together with a full exposition of the nature and way of redemption. The Holy Scriptures open to man a true account of the relations and purposes of this life. They give him clear knowledge of his natural condition of enmity to God ; and also of the benign will of God concerning him. They explain the divine character and the government peculiarly exercised toward man, so far as necessary for his welfare. They solve the problem of the hostilities and ruin in physical nature with the wretchedness and dismal foreboding of the human condition by the fact that sin, with its train of curses, has found its way into our world by human agency. They accurately predict the consequences of transgression of the divine law ; as also the practicability of recovery by timely repentance and embrace of the Saviour. "Repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." They tell us, in the plainest terms, that this is a probationary state, which must soon close like the coming of a thief in the night, and then all must be ushered into the changelessness of eternity ; that though we merit nothing but the wrath of a just God, he has made a way for our escape ; that as sin has diffused itself to the ends of the earth, so the plan of salvation stretches its line to the furthest verge, embraces the lowest and most estranged, makes its life-giving offers to all who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto God ; that unless we employ

our powers with all diligence to amass treasures in heaven, we must receive the outpouring of divine vengeance forever. Thus the claim of the law and the graciousness of faith are unfolded to us. Thus we are conducted within the veil of sacred things, and enjoy the glories of redeeming love. And here we learn that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" that it is better to "be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness; for the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly;" that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," till the rapturous praise of heaven shall break around the glorified humanity. These great truths revealed in the word of God continually accumulate fresh light and power, and come to the heart with more manifest demonstration as time passes away. This revelation is every way sufficient for man's need, and exactly suited to his condition, diversified as it is in various spheres of life. Ignorance has thus been dispersed from the mind; and light poured in upon it; and no stout-hearted unbeliever can unblushingly put in this plea. How clear and abundant the light which this salvation throws abroad over the world, chasing away doubt and superstitious error! leaving man to

sin, if he sin, with eyes open amid the gospel blaze, or wilfully and heinously shut in solitary night.

— It is great as to its provision. The divine love has been shown toward the holy angels who dwell in God's presence and do his will; it was signally manifested to the unsinning pair in Eden; but in the gracious provisions of this salvation, there is such stupendous mercy to fallen, guilty man as the universe never before witnessed. Although, by reason of the sin of our federal head, a world of sinning beings has been made; although they are naturally dead in trespasses and in sins, and liable to eternal damnation, yet the infinite, unmerited grace of God has provided a Saviour. And, notwithstanding the aggravated character of man's rebellion and the depth of his fall, the trampling on the righteous law of God and the erasion of his image, everything has been done on the part of that Saviour for his restoration. Hence "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man;" "For God so loved the world; that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is all of grace. "In this was manifested the love of God;" for, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the pro-

pitiation for our sins." Man was unable to keep the law, or attain righteousness; yet this was through his voluntary sin. His ruin, therefore, would not have stained the brightness of the divine character, for he had broken God's command and dared his vengeance. But how worthy of the grace of God is this plan of salvation, which satisfies the divine justice while it sets the prisoner free, and restores him to forfeited holiness and heaven. Great is its mystery.

" — The firstborn sons of light
Desire in vain its depths to see;
They cannot reach the mystery,
The length, and breadth, and height."

Had one of those pure spirits that worship before the throne of light been sent to relieve our woe, and to whisper hope in the ear of drooping humanity, what a messenger of mercy would he have been! Surely such a gift must have started the tears of gratefulness. But who is this that comes "travelling in the greatness of his strength," in the authority of the God-head? Listen to the voice of the Father: "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him!" And that Son assumes our nature, and makes that atonement for the world's sin which man could not provide. In the dignity and divine attributes of that Being who hung on the cross as the one only sacrifice for sin, we see the greatness of this salvation. Now God smiles. Now are we come to "Mount Sion and unto the city of the living God." Now

the thunderings of Sinai are lost in the distance, while the accents of forgiving love fall on the ear of the penitent bowed at the cross. The wicked one has wandered afar, but "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him." O how glad a meeting is that when rebel man is reconciled to God through Jesus Christ! The law is magnified, but the sinner is redeemed. We see the greatness of this salvation, moreover, in the greatness of the work accomplished. Satanic dominion has bound its chains of gloomy misery around the powers of man, and made him a foe to the God of all goodness. This bondage must be broken; this supremacy of wickedness must be overthrown; these legions of hell's emissaries and agents must fly shrieking to their home in the pit; the head of the Serpent must be bruised beneath the foot of the conquering Seed of the woman: and abundant is the power in this salvation to accomplish such great work. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint: from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it." Filled with the grossest depravity, the most grovelling and revolting tendencies, all is vile, and the crown of glory is fallen; but a fountain is opened where the Ethiop stains of sin may be cleansed away, and the hideous leprosy healed: for, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like

crimson, they shall be as wool." "The iniquity of us all" has been borne, and sufficient atonement made for the sins of the world. The untold myriads of earth are the subjects of this provision: the thief on the cross and Saul the persecutor; the monarch and the beggar; the enlightened philosopher and the untutored savage; those of all times, and territories, and tongues. "And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the river shall come, shall live; and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed: and everything shall live whither the river cometh." Like the light of the full-orbed sun, like the waters of the chainless ocean, like the free air we breathe—so full and fetterless is this great salvation. The provision is prepared, placed within the reach of all. Now the sound goes through the earth, the "tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people,"—"He that believeth (gives hearty faith to the gospel in all things) and is baptized (thus declaring his belief by his profession) shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Yet, after all, man must go down to the tomb; but, "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." He has disinherited himself of future blessedness; but "the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." O what amazing mercy! When we consider the

sufficiency and freeness of these provisions, meeting the wants of the soul with an accuracy which shows the wise design of God, we must be astonished that any will reject, or dare to cast on them reproach.

—— It is great in its incentive. For this salvation not only offers us rescue from these fearful evils, but employs powerful means to draw us into acceptance. A monitor has been implanted, which is often as a light in a dark place; and conscience is a reprover of sin. But this mighty work has not been wholly resigned to conscience, fallen and enfeebled with all the other powers of man's soul. "It is the Spirit which quickeneth." We are told that the Spirit of God strove with the ungodly before the flood; but the abundance of the Spirit's influences, like the breaking out of waters in the wilderness and streams in the desert, has only been enjoyed since the Saviour's ascension. It has been sent forth "reproving the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Since the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation," this is the weapon used by the Spirit to turn many "from the power of Satan unto God;" and it is by the Spirit that Christ shall be with his disciples to "the end of the world." It opens the eyes to the destructive nature and results of sin. It uncovers the law; the commandment comes, sin revives, and the sinner feels himself justly condemned to die. But it gives hope in despair. The sword of jus-

tice seems about to cut the rebel down, but the news of pardon is brought. Made sensible of the impossibility of escape by any self-righteous deed, for the arm of power is withered; fearing the impending penalties of the violated law, anxious to escape that which is so offensive to God as sin, the sinner flies for refuge to the hope set before him in the gospel. He smites upon his breast, and exclaims, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" And the secret influences of the Spirit infuse strength into his weak, helpless nature, giving power to repent of sin, to believe in the atonement of Jesus Christ, and walk in his commands. It leads to the rude cross; there the poor sinner beholds the Lamb of God bleeding and dying on account of sin, and he hates the monster; there he sees him slain for himself, and he embraces the Saviour—the heart is Christ's. So great a blessing is this Spirit to man. The risen Christ breathed upon the disciples the gift of the Holy Ghost; and it fails not to affect every one with its enlightening, warning, drawing influences. O how precious a gift! And for the truth of this, I appeal to the experience even of the unconverted in this assembly. The visits of the good Spirit show you, sinner, how interested is Heaven for your salvation, and how much it is now doing to secure it. How frequently and powerfully has it descended on your heart! It has come in the lone meditation of your retreat from the world, and amid the bustle of

worldly care. It has startled your dream in the dark silence of midnight, and troubled you in the glare of noonday. It has spoken in the thoughtfulness of the couch of sickness, and in the vigorous plans of health. It has whispered while you have been shedding the tear of anguish over the damp grave of some departed friend, and thundered while you have been recklessly mingling in vicious pursuits and pleasures. When you have heard the prayers and the exhortations of God's people, when you have listened to the preaching of the servant of Christ, when you have read the Bible, when you have looked into the oblivious corruption of the grave, when you have cast your thought beyond the narrow span of this life, and felt that

"A point of time, a moment's space,
Removes me to that heav'nly place,
Or shuts me up in hell"—

a sound of warning has been heard, predicting the destinies of eternity. It has come, though you have wooed it to depart, repulsed and grieved it. Ever watchful and attentive, though you have been careless and haughty, it has followed and striven with you. It has traced your guilt. It has exposed your danger. It has lifted the mystery from the pit of everlasting woe, then startled your shuddering spirit by showing you to yourself to be standing on the very verge of the gulf. Thus the Spirit has worked; thus it still works. O what great salvation, that it

should thus repeatedly visit obstinate man ! Yet he does often oppose the expostulation and entreaty of this his best friend, and “resist the Holy Ghost.” The motive-power of this salvation, however, cannot be seen in true vividness without direct regard to the interests of eternity. Great incentive is brought from the wonders wrought out in this life, in deliverances from evil and communications of good ; but this world, in its proper light, can be considered only as a prelude to other and eternal scenes. Truly are the ways of Christ pleasant and peaceful here ; but the chief, absorbing attraction lies in heavenly felicity, where we may be with the Redeemer and behold his glory : and to this tends all the labour of this life. The descriptions of the abodes of the holy in another world conspire to present a prospect of the highest grandeur and beatitude conceivable to our minds ; still, “it doth not yet *appear* what we shall be.” We shall enter into a state of holy rest, possess that fulness of joy, of eternal and unalloyed pleasures, which remains at God’s right hand. How glorious the hope of sinning and dying no more ; of having all tears wiped away by the smiling of the divine presence ; of being forever out of the reach of a tyrannizing flesh, and a deceitful world, and a wily devil ! How high a delight to rejoin those loved companions who have washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb, and gone before us to the glory of the

upper sanctuary, to mingle in the raptures of the angelic hosts, and swell the burning seraph's song with the new, the louder note of redeeming love! With the innumerable company, how will the heavenly arches ring with alleluia to God and the Lamb! How lofty an honour to see Jesus "face to face," "as he is;" to be presented "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy;" to view "the King in his beauty," and hold communion with him on his throne; and thus, changing from glory to glory, "be forever with the Lord!" O, what are the dull, vapid pleasures of earth, compared with the vision of heaven opened to the immortal spirit, with its crowns of righteousness and thrones of glory—with its robes of holiness and river of life—with its opening vistas of coming joy revealed in the eternal sunshine of its Lord! Say, worldling, what have you to compare with the promise of heaven? And the Spirit presses this upon you to allure you into the path leading thither. O what great salvation! On the other hand, it presents the fearful end of persevering iniquity. What is it? "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "He will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." "The triumphing of the wicked is short; and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment." "Do ye not know their tokens, that the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? They shall be brought forth to

the day of wrath." "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Sin is the cause and sting of death; but the righteous anger of Jehovah is the sting of sin, and must be its fearful penalty forever. The greatness of that destruction awaiting the unyielding rebel, proclaims the greatness of that salvation which could rescue him. The miseries of sin in this world are not inconsiderable,—with the stings of conscience—with the strugglings of the blessed Spirit—with the menaces of the law—with restlessness, and fear, and shame, and pain, and sorrow—with the gloom of the death-hour, while the storm of retribution gathers in blackness and terrific muttering on the horizon. But the truth of God would be met with no trifling or indifference, could we reveal the doom of the last judgment, the agony and horror that must burst on the soul as it is driven into the dread abode of the lost. Could we unveil the scenes transpiring there, where the mercies of God are never known, where the soul must endure the load of divine wrath without hope of escape forever, where the gnawing of the worm that dieth not, and the gnashing of teeth, and long, bitter wailings, and the sounding torments of everlasting burnings, form the music and the imagery, methinks the sinner would rouse from his stupid slumber. Incentives! great as heaven and hell can furnish, all

time and all eternity, you have in this great salvation.

II. We come now to a consideration of the important inquiry of the apostle, "*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*" And what are we to understand by neglecting it? Does this entirely relate to those who openly declare hostility to religion and its ordinances, the most sunken in crime and most removed in alienation from God? To those who swallow iniquity as the ox drinketh in the water, and are not ashamed of the mark of the beast on their foreheads; who glory in trampling on the dearest rights of others, and in lifting up their blasphemy against Heaven? We believe that such monsters do not form the majority of those to whom the inquiry is applied. These are not all defying champions of the armies of Israel; they are not all so vile as to labour to press multitudes of precious souls into the way of death. But the sweeping appellation of neglecters is addressed to all who fail of a full appropriation of the blessings of this great salvation. It comprises all that vast multitude who may rationally assent to religious truth, who may visit the means of grace instituted in the Church, who may obey the regulations of society and the courtesies of life, who may be esteemed moral by their fellows, but come short of the glory of God by shutting out the vital kingdom of Christ from their hearts, by not being in earnest to secure an

interest in heaven. For, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And any, even the least, falling short of this is neglect of this great salvation. What avenue of escape for any of us can there be if we do not take the living way, which is Christ? Yet, from the large number who live in neglect, we presume they expect in some manner to escape. But *the how* is a matter with which we all have personally and practically to do at this time; and the foundation on which such neglecters are building must be tried by the conditions of this salvation.

— Here is one who has renounced the grosser and more apparent crimes which disfigure humanity; cannot be charged with debauchery, with intemperance, with profanity, with avarice, with cheating, with scoffing; is a good friend and citizen, rigidly honest in commercial dealing. There is such absence of apparent misdemeanour that he is accounted good and faithful by his fellow-men. But here he stops. With this comely, outward character he is satisfied. Shall he escape? No! He is a neglecter of this great salvation, which requires "truth in the inward parts." What regard for God, what obedience to his claims, what coming up to the requirements of the gospel, in repentance, and faith, and love, and holy joy, do we find here? There is a destitution of the very first principles of this salvation.

— Here is one who has been religiously trained; been blessed with pious parents and friends, their advices, their prayers, their godly example, perhaps their dying injunctions; one who has been accustomed to see religion in its attractiveness and powerful operation, and enjoyed precious privileges for spiritual improvement: but, notwithstanding affectionate admonitions and gospel mercies, the youth ripens into the fulness of life, having neglected a personal attainment of this salvation. Shall such a one escape? Can a father's prayers and a mother's tears give security in the time of fiery trial, and open the portal of bliss? No! There is here strange and wicked neglect, and very dark crime against God.

— Here is one who has undefined views of the mercy of God, believing it so "plenteous" that he will not execute judgment against sin, but eventually exhibit a universal clemency toward the sinful, and all shall escape. Hence he pursues his own way, striving to persuade himself that God, for the sake of Christ, smiles, and will account him one of his jewels; but his heart remains unchanged, and unacquainted with the joys and hopes of forgiveness and holiness. Shall he escape? No! He does dishonour to the greatness of this salvation, whose message is this: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And *whosoever will*, let him

take the water of life freely." For "he that believeth shall be saved."

—— Here is one who goes further than the character we first mentioned, and his conduct is characterized by acts of distinguished bounty to the indigent, and to the various interests of philanthropy. He gives his goods to feed the poor, and is prominent in every undertaking of worldly relief. He seems possessed of true nobility of character, and his soul or his purse seems to be a fountain of good. Perhaps we read in the newspaper that he has left so large a bequest to this and that worthy object. Perhaps he is a learned man, and prides himself in extensive erudition and its consequent power. His life is very regular, and he seems continually to say, "Lord, Lord!" But these things are his hope and trust. He is confident in these worthy deeds of the law, that he shall thereby be justified and saved. Shall he escape? No! For this great salvation is neglected which says: "Ye must be born again;" "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified;" "Being justified freely by His grace;" "For ye are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" "The just shall live by faith."

—— Here is one who formally professes to the world the religion of Jesus Christ, whose name is on the record of the Church-membership, who has assumed the vows of such a profession, yet slights the means of grace and the

opportunities for growth in holiness. Family-prayer is totally or partially neglected, and the devotion of the closet nearly forsaken; the voice is seldom heard confessing Christ before men, and offering to them the riches of the gospel; the cross is shunned, and the withering influence of a backward professor brought to bear against the Redeemer's progress; there is a regular attendance on the worship of the sanctuary and the ordinances of Christ, but the arms are folded in sloth; scarcely a finger is lifted or a foot stirred to bring sinners to God; the prayer-meeting and the class-meeting are now and then attended, but it is nothing but drudgery to the soul, and done for the appearance of the thing, without striving after God, without reaching after greater love and inward power. And thus the so-named Christian, in a round of formalities, settles into ease and indifference, while the ungodly are pursuing their way uncared for and unrestrained. Shall such escape? No! Surely as a God lives in heaven, and rules in earth, they cannot escape, though they may fondly dream of it, and say they hope to meet their brethren above. How fearful a position to profess likeness to Christ, and have the image of the earthly, the sensual, the devilish; to enjoy the means afforded by this salvation in abundance, and not secure its vitality in the heart! There is great difference between the name and the reality of this religion. The former will avail you nothing without the

latter. If you wish to know what the reality of it is, read the First Epistle of the Apostle John. O, inactive, reckless, devil-serving, world-loving, neglectful professor of this blessed Christianity, awake from your slumber! Remember that "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." On what are you building, and what are your materials? You wrong the Church of Christ—you stab experimental godliness; but you wrong none so much as yourself. *How shall you escape?*—you who love the things in the world more than heaven, the flesh more than God,—you who forget Christ among the cares of the world, its farm and its merchandise,—you who think you can serve your Master by following Peter's denial,—you who imagine God will be satisfied with that half-way sacrifice of the heart, with that little pittance of love and faith, with that endeavour to combine the service of Satan and the service of God,—you who think you can advance to heaven while you are continually losing ground, and seldom think of pressing forward,—you who hope to stand boldly in the day of judgment, while you are afraid to lisp a word against sin,—*how shall ye escape?*

— Here is one who once enlisted as a soldier of Immanuel, but has ranged again under the banner and among the dark ranks of the enemy; who once felt the love of Christ and the love of the brethren warming, and melting, and

energizing, but has grown cold and distant under the icy touch of this world's aims and enticements. He once vowed to serve God and get to heaven, but has broken all his good resolves, mocks God, wounds the Saviour in the house of his friends, afflicts the faithful ; and perhaps his last state is worse than the first. He was once heard pouring his earnest petitions into the ear of a smiling Saviour, but now he casts off fear and restrains prayer. He once delighted in these scenes of holy communion with the children of God, but now stands aloof and regards them, perhaps with painful remembrances, but with no gushing joy. O, poor apostate ! how shall you escape, after such neglect and rebellion as this ? You have known the way of righteousness, but deserted it. This great salvation came to you in infinite mercy, but you have trodden it under foot. The feast of your Father's love was spread for you, and the robe of the Son was put on you ; but you have spurned the feast and rent the robe, and now stand out under the burning wrath of God : for, " Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed ! *Good were it for that man if he had never been born.*"

O no ! for any who will neglect this great salvation there is no excuse, no way of escape. They sin in the midst of light from reason, and conscience, and the Spirit of God. They see the good part, but embrace the curse. It is required that sin be renounced, but they cling tenaciously

to this, their worst foe and their sure destruction. They press the viper to their bosoms. They can plead no excuse but the wickedness of their hearts, which rejects the only remedy. It must be evident to every one who will read the word of God and think on his ways, that there is no avenue of escape to us by such neglect. What say you to this, sinner? The divine threatening betokens terrible calamity. The woes pronounced are not idle words, but the precursors of judgment. Consider on the end of your course. Perhaps you are just entering on life. O make sure of this great salvation, and resist no longer all that is good and holy. And if it be that you have spent many years in neglect and sin, and are compelled to look back on long-continued ingratitude and hardness, on a dark catalogue of evil deeds and habits, we beseech you to stop; and ponder—and at the eleventh hour, perhaps trembling between two worlds, resolve you will no more lift that puny, that almost nerveless arm against Jehovah. O that the Spirit might show you how destitute of a way of escape you are in neglecting this great salvation for *one* moment! You have no power of averting the vengeance against this sin; and the greatness of the sin is according to the greatness of the salvation which we neglect. Now

“Who would not give a trifle to prevent
What he would give a thousand worlds to cure?”

Your sin must be damning, unless you avail

yourself of the blood and righteousness of Christ. Think, then, upon the aggravated nature of your neglect—for so long a course of time—amid so many provocations offered to divine anger—continually deepening in depravity—in spite of so many mercies and enjoyments, so much light and truth, so many invitations and opportunities, so much promised peace and happiness. O what guilty neglect! The miserable spirits in hell who lost their heavenly estate, never committed that sin of which you are charged—the rejection of a Saviour. If Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum must be “brought down to hell” because they disregarded “the mighty works” in their day, what must be your condition should you fail amid your present privileges? If the daring wickedness of the deluged world, or the crimes of the fire-stormed cities of the plain, or the unbelief of the privileged Jews, had no palliation, and no way of escape, how naked, O sinner, in this day of light and grace, must thy soul appear in the sight of thy God! How vain will your self-raised subterfuges appear when you must stand at the bar of your Judge, and in the presence of the world! *What would* you then give for these privileges to come back but for one hour! for one more entreaty to accept this great salvation! “A thousand worlds?” Yes—most joyfully: but then the words of the text will sound your settled doom—then it will be *too late!* *How* shall you, then, escape the

summons of the trumpet-call, the searching eye of God's omniscience, the awful sense of his omnipresence, the thunder of his omnipotence? Where shall you escape him? He comes in judgment—shall you escape by opposing his authority as you now do? Can you seize the forked lightning and make it fall harmless at your feet? Can you say to the sweeping tornado in its desolating track, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further? Can you place your hand on the heaving earthquake, and lull it to repose? Can you enchain the tumultuous deep, and bid the mad tempests become evening zephyrs? Then think not of withstanding the word of God's power. No, no, sinner: you must forsake your sin! You have no shield, and how can you quench its fiery darts in the hour of death? You have no extenuating plea, and how can you face in judgment that Being who is now proffering you this great salvation, who invites you to reconciliation and heaven? The scenes of Nazareth, and Gethsemane, and Calvary, have fled; the day of hope is gone. There is no kind invitation of bleeding mercy, but the sound of the trump awakes the universe to retribution. The cross is there, but no Lamb thereon; for it sends forth fiery indignation upon those who have neglected its great salvation. You must stand there, sinner, unless you will yield; you must stand having no excuse to offer, while heaven and hell, God, and angels, and men, will pronounce you

fit to be damned—you must stand, and the omnipotence of God will give you no chance of escape while the burning sentence falls on your head, and you sink to endless woe! But, blessed be God, we point you now to a Saviour, and a *great* salvation! He poured out strong cries and tears for you. He died the friend of the poor sinner. Turn not your back on him again. Press your way through every difficulty to meet him and receive his blessing. Behold the Lamb of God! “He is able to save to the uttermost.” You may here obtain mercy for your sin, and grace for your need.

VIII.

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.—HEB. x, 35.

I. FAITH is the grand principle of the gospel covenant; it is the rallying point of the soul's energy; it is the basis of all true religious experience. It is the eye of the Christian soul; so that, though the objects and consummation of holy obedience are unseen by sense, though all that makes religion valuable and eternity awful is not now spread out to the vision—but God the Creator and Saviour, the uncreated radiance that beams from his throne, the habitation and employment of angels, and archangels, and sinless beings, the glories worn by the spirits of the

finally faithful, are shut out by the veil of flesh drawn round the soul of man—yet faith grasps the invisible, and becomes “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” It is an invincible reliance of the human heart on the assurance of its God, as if the object had had its present subsistence in the soul. It is accompanied by evidence equal and even superior to that of the senses, and affords demonstration clear and conclusive, as if unfolded to the reason. For, firm trust in the benevolence, and power, and veracity of Jehovah presents sufficient ground, though the end expected lie far beyond the ordinary course of things. By no means is gospel faith that mere speculative belief or intellectual assent which grows out of rational conviction, and which may be possessed by devils in hell, or even by wicked men in this world. “With *the heart* man believeth unto righteousness;” and any faith which comes short of a surrender of the affections, and the laying down of the whole soul’s obedience at the foot of the cross, cannot avail for salvation. It renounces every other refuge from evil, every other source of good. It forsakes every other dependence, and casts its all upon the mercy of God in Christ. It gives a full reliance to the atonement made by him for the sins of the world. It clasps him to the heart as a personal Saviour. It embraces him as “all and in all”—an all-sufficient portion in time and in eternity. It lays hold of him

fixedly as the Being, in all his characteristics, such as presented in divine revelation—an infallible Instructor; an all-powerful Mediator and Intercessor; a perfect Saviour; a righteous Ruler and Judge. And while this “work of God”—this *believing* “on him whom he hath sent” to be a propitiatory and vicarious sacrifice to redeem the world from the guilt, and dominion, and consequences of sin—is wrought in the soul, the blessings flowing from him are its rich inheritance—ransom from the captivity of sin, deliverance from all evil, exaltation to the glories of the upper kingdom.

It is evident that the confidence here mentioned by the apostle is not merely that trust in the personal sacrifice of Christ whence springs pardon of sin, for he writes to those who had been “illuminated,” and *knew in themselves* that they had “in heaven a better and an enduring substance.” It is the filial trust of a believing heart, washed from guilt in the redeeming blood, already an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ, because adopted as a child, receiving continually the smiles of Heaven through the intercession of Christ, delighting to look upon him as one “delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.” Freed from the curse of the law, with the burden of sin rolled off, it can stand erect and boldly rejoice upon the rock of salvation. And in what is this confidence placed? In self-goodness, or self-power? No; but in God, through

Jesus Christ alone. Man has nothing within or around himself whereon to hang this confidence. This, then, abases him in his own esteem; so that out of Christ he deems himself unworthy of consideration. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. . . . Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith." The more of this confidence the Christian possesses, the more humble will he be; for it strips him of self-righteousness, and makes Christ supreme in the heart. And on what is it immediately grounded? Does it arise out of a faint "hope," as it is sometimes miserably termed, that Christ delivers us from the guilt and bondage of sin, and that therefore we shall escape its consequences in another world? Does it spring like a logical sequence from repeatedly observing that we perform such and such duties, that we obey such and such commandments, that we bring forth such and such fruits of the Spirit? What is the testimony of the divine oracles?—"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." The Spirit itself bearing witness with his spirit

of his adoption and heirship, is the reason of the Christian's confidence. Foremost, and without which nothing else can be of any avail, must be the direct testimony of the Spirit of God that we are born of him. How do we know that this is so—that we do not labour under an illusion of the imagination. This knowledge, too, is wrought in us by the operation of the Holy Spirit. It is the concurrent witness of our own spirit, the “answer of a good conscience toward God,” by the graces in us, and the holy obedience given to every commandment. This childlike reliance of the saint, therefore, this close affiance with God, this rejoicing confidence, is not founded on dim speculations, on vague hopes, on boasted deeds, but on the direct and clear testimony of the Divine Spirit with his spirit that his sins are remitted through the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God; that, reconciled to God, he is adopted as his child and made an heir of glory. In this must be the basis of all the enjoyment we have in the blessings of the kingdom of grace here, and all for which we may look in the glory hereafter; for it is the sole means we have of knowing they belong to us.

— The Christian possessed of this confidence may well declare, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour;” for with it comes all the train of joyful promises for this world, and for the life to come. The present is “hid with Christ in God,” and

hope is "full of immortality." With free access to the throne of grace, communion, intimate and sweet, is held with Deity; every want may be made known and met. Exalted and strengthened by precious experience of the verity of God, the Christian is actuated by loftier impulses than the spirit of this world can impart, or even understand, and performs actions which unsanctified humanity could never accomplish. He looks over the dispensations of Heaven from the foundation of the world, and through all the changes of the Church, sees that this confidence has been the pledge and earnest of blessing. By it "the elders obtained a good report." "Our fathers trusted in thee, and were not confounded," is his language, as he recounts the past. He is enabled now to lay hold of Christ as the author of spiritual benefit, and with exulting assurance look onward to the felicity promised to those who cast it not away. This confidence of the Christian, fragrant with the merit of the shed blood of the Saviour, "is accounted," like that of Abraham, "for righteousness."

II. Such confidence "hath great recompense of reward;" and the Author of the confidence is the giver of the reward. What! does he recompense us for not casting away so inestimable a gift? Does he recompense us for an act which we could not perform without his almighty aid? But it is like his mercy in all things. Let our hearts be "lost in wonder, love, and praise!"

— Christian confidence bestows personal reward in this life. In hours of distress it ministers consolation. In danger it brings preservation and rescue. In trouble it gives support and relief. In temptation it provides succour, and makes a way of escape. In all circumstances it is a deep source of peace and joy to the pious heart, such as never entered the dreams of earthly pleasure,—in health and sickness, in wealth and poverty, in honour and reproach, in enjoyment and persecution, in life and death. It realizes not only a deliverance from all evil, but a communication of all that is good. The desert blooms again; and flowers and fountains are spread over the waste, desolate heart. The soul is strong for duty, and ready for the trial of its faith. Toil is sweet, and sacrifice a delight. Change may go on all around, but it triumphs over change. Years may gather upon the brow, but their faithfulness to the service of God has not diminished its freshness and comfort. Who can tell how rich in delight earth may be, with this confidence in God keeping the soul; with the kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy as its government; with the sure promise that the maintenance of this confidence is constantly adding to the lustre of our heavenly crown?

— It recompenses in its external influence in this world. However humble his walk in life, the Christian believer is, to some extent, an

example. He is looked to by his associates in the Church of Christ. If an unshrinking confidence in God our Redeemer be seen in another, it inspires the heart of every beholding believer with courage. This mutual influence, this binding sympathy, is the strength of the Lord's host. If we are compelled to distrust each other, united effort is as impossible as a rope of sand. Every truly evangelical Christian must see this confidence necessary in the joint efforts of the Church. How often, in earthly contests, the cowardice of a few has turned the tide of battle to retreat! How often the dauntless bravery of one has resolved the hearts of a host to conquer, though they die! Christian confidence is not, indeed, that which handed the name of Leonidas to posterity as the hero of Thermopylæ, or that of Miltiades as the conqueror at Marathon; not such as gave Napoleon the glory of Austerlitz, or Wellington that of Waterloo; not such as enabled Tallien to crush the self-imposed tyrant of France, and check the rushing revolution, or Washington to plant the eagle-standard on the soil of a new nation. The Christian's strife has higher origin than earthly passion, nobler end, than earthly glory or freedom. Yet, if such bold examples be needful in present worldly peril, and as torches to the future, how much more is Christian confidence demanded for eminent moral danger! If it be cowardice to retreat before the coming foe on the battle-field;

how much more dastardly the tergiversation of the Christian! You would fix the stain of disgrace upon the soldier who flees from the sound of the charge, and the smoke of the cannon; but how much rather place the foul blot upon him who has enlisted under a Captain leading to certain victory, and yet turns his back whenever the black banner of the enemy comes in sight! Alexander, called the Great, commanded a cowardly soldier in his army, who bore his name, to come before him; then demanded that he should either renounce his name or prove himself a better warrior. How well might the Master thus address many sneaking, cowardly followers, who can scarcely be distinguished from the enemy's adherents! A want of this confidence seriously diminishes the power of religion over the ungodly also. Those who know the promises of God, who have "tasted the powers of the world to come," place themselves eminently before a wicked world. Their course is watched, their profession and practice compared, the lurking-places of their falsity discovered by the curious eye of the sinner. Shall the recreancy of Christians dishonour the cause of Christ? O how often has the confidence of the steadfast saint confounded a gainsaying world! It has led them to discern that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of man. Amid inhuman persecution and cruelty it has terrified and shamed the evil sons of Beelzebub.

How much spiritual strength is imparted to the world by one example such as that of Luther, declaring that he would go and plead the cause of his Master at Worms, although as many devils inhabited the place as there were tiles on the roofs of the houses! How much from the dying triumph of the unyielding martyr Huss, his forerunner: "What I taught with my lips, I seal with my blood!" Did not Cranmer, as he stretched his hand to the flames, become a beacon-light to England? Thus, though less conspicuously, and in more unnoticed situations, may every Christian show his estimate of this blessed religion; thus may he win for it tributes of reverence from others. Is it not happiness to be conscious that our confidence not only ministers to our own joys, but is a living and abiding evidence of saving truth, and must exert a holy, ennobling influence upon souls around us?

— But its highest, its supremely *great* "recompense of reward" is beyond the grave. Therefore the apostle exhorts his Hebrew brethren to constancy by reminding them of their "better and enduring substance." The glorious end of this confidence must be unrealized till eternal ages shall unroll their growing wonders. Though we sacrifice everything, lack everything, suffer everything here, still this reliance reaches to the revelation of a more blissful inheritance. Now it is unspeakable, yea, unsearchable; for it is unbounded, ceaseless enjoyment. Comprehend

all the glories of heaven, measure its exquisite delights, weigh its crowns of gold, number its palms of victory, spread out to the breezes of paradise its robes of light, encircle its companionships, and you have not yet this "great recompense of reward"—you have not yet spanned eternity—you have not yet reached that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!" With expanding and quickened faculties, with ever-opening objects for thought and feeling, with closer approach to the Infinite, and conforming, changing into the divine likeness, the faithful saints shall reap the eternity of their reward.

III. "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence." And shall we? If possessed of so rich a treasure, what folly, what spiritual suicide, to suffer ourselves to be deprived of it! The apostle here alludes to the conduct of the ancient warrior. The Lacedæmonians were celebrated for a valour which chose death before an ignominious defeat; therefore, they threw their lives away rather than shrink from the foe. The mothers of their young men often gave them, as they departed for the fight, the shield of the father, and commanded them to bring it back or be brought back upon it—that is, to return victorious or slain. So the loyal, valiant Paul bids the soldier of the cross never to give up his shield, never cast it away in foul retreat. Cast not away your confidence. Ours is a mighty

moral conflict. The enemies with whom we contend are numerous and formidable, subtle and superior to ourselves. Our only hope is in Him on whom we can depend as the "Captain of our salvation." In him we know we may gain the victory. But this confidence is the badge of our fellowship with him, at the same time that it is our shield, invulnerable to the attempts of the adversary. If we cast this away, we can have no hope of succour and deliverance from him. We must fall a prey to the devourer. Let us, then, resist the various devices to ensnare us.

— Cast not away your confidence in any time of degeneracy or distraction in the Church. At all times, let us be careful that we are not a part of its corruption. If it be impure, let not the Evil One urge that as an apology for you to forsake God. He has ever had his pure worshippers, and ever will have so long as any remain to "fight the good fight of faith." But what though the whole Church forsake the commandments of God's law? Does that furnish excuse for us? Shalt "thou escape the judgment of God?" If all flee, let us fight single-handed, while Immanuel is with us; for, "if God be for us, who can be against us?" We may encourage each other against our common enemy, as Hezekiah strengthened Judah against Sennacherib: "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all

the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles." Remember who is the Head of the Church, and that he has promised to guide the faithful safely to their heavenly rest.

— Cast it not away in time of feeble personal enjoyment. Faith may not always be equally strong and unwavering, and the witness of our adoption may not always shine clearly. Our assurance will be according to our resignation to God's will, and as our nature hangs upon his grace. Yet, our lack should not discourage us. Especially beware of the common error of measuring religious standing by another's apparent possession. Too often sincere Christians are disheartened by unfortunate comparison with the seeming ecstasies of another, who shouts from the mountain-top to them in the vale below. Surely, if we behold in others graces which we cannot claim, this should furnish a new object for effort, and by seeing their attainableness, inspire vigour for the struggle. But the Spirit may manifest himself in various ways, and men may have different ways of manifesting themselves. We cannot invariably estimate the degree felt in the heart by the external sign. If we examine the living testimonies of God's word, we shall find plain and unerring instruction. If we obtain the illumination of the Spirit

of God, our state will be revealed, and we shall be directed to the truth. Should the investigation of our condition, by gospel requirement, show a loss of once-enjoyed faith and feeling, it is no time to cast away the confidence we have, but to rally for a new effort, to strive for more. If we have entirely lost our assurance, and comfort, and peace, we must find a return to the bosom of the Saviour by the same path of humiliation, and repentance, and faith, we trod when first a lost and undone sinner; must utter the same cry to God for mercy, feel the same self-abasement, make the same entire surrender, and may rejoice in a like victory. But cast not away the confidence already possessed. "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart."

— Cast it not away in any sore temptation. Long as we live we must pass through it; still, in the severest attack, "let us hold fast our profession: for we have not a high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Numberless are the darts of the enemy to try this shield: they come ringing against it, and if the saint is proof, how he sends up his curses against its Maker! But if we have vulnerable points, Satan is not long in making the discovery.

The world, the flesh, the devil assail; they come combined in battle array; they come each with insidious snares. Yet, although they encompass you with their besetments, cling to this shield, "wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked," and you shall come off a joyful conqueror. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." Even should you be "in heaviness through manifold temptations," still cling to your shield, and "greatly rejoice" "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." If you have already fallen, rise quickly, for the enemy is bearing down upon you. Grasp the shield again! Betray not your confidence by going still further backward—by wholly giving over the strife. You are then certainly lost. Recover your position, and press onward without one instant's delay: for, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

— Cast it not away in trial and affliction. These should rather strengthen our hold. It may be the will of God that our confidence be thus tested, as was that of Job. Therefore, "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange

thing happened unto you : but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings ; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Look on to heaven's enduring portion ! " For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." A wicked generation may task its ingenuity to persecute you, may point at you the finger of scorn, may treat you with chilling neglect ; but, " Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Be fearless, then ; for, " If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye ; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." With such confidence abiding in the heart, the frowns of the world are as much sunbeams as its smiles to the Christian ; for he has the inbeamings of a holy presence unknown to the worldling. Your path may lie amid rough scenes and trying misfortunes, but let not tribulation hide you from God. He can " furnish a table [for you] in the wilderness," as he did for the sojourning Israelites. It may be your lot to lose earthly possessions, human honours, bodily health and activity, the associations of loved friends—but still trust in God ! Judge him not

“By feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace.”

In the midst of affliction, let not wilful unbelief and traitorism shut out the smiling of Heaven. Unloose not that anchor “which entereth to that within the veil;” and, trusting in those promises which are sure as the eternal throne, let this be the language of the heart:—

“Give joy or grief, give ease or pain,
Take life or friends away,
But let me find them all again
In that eternal day!”

Forget not for one moment that “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;” and with full affection and unretreating resolve, declare with the holy patriarch—“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” Hold fast, and the grasp shall become stronger!

— Cast it not away should the prosperity and flattery of the world try to attract you from it. Perhaps this is the least dreaded, but it is the most dangerous combatant; for, like Judas, it first kisses, then betrays. But the Christian should keep in mind that however the treasures of earth may accumulate around, every prop is taken away if this confidence be removed from Christ. It is in the enjoyment of this confidence, grasping as it does the substance of eternal felicities, that we see the emptiness of this world’s mirth and the fleetness of its gifts. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our

faith." Riches, honour, pleasure, are sure to build upon the sand, because they know nothing more enduring than this world, and must be swept away at the outbursting of divine judgment. He who leans on such dependencies is like one pressing his feet on the crumbling edge of a dizzy precipice, while everlasting destruction awaits him below! Trust not in riches. Welcome not honour. Delight not in pleasure. Think more of maintaining this godly confidence than of the gift of a whole world!

We will exhort each other, then, my brethren, to hold firmly this confidence. "*Cast*" it not away; for, unless you do, none will be able to *take* it from you; not even the flesh, or the world, or Satan, potent as they are. If you lose it, you must throw it away; you may keep it to the end, and receive the recompense of reward. It is worth clinging to so long as there is a single nerve unparalyzed: "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." What is our present state? Is our confidence weak? Do we feel a want of full reliance on the wisdom and goodness of God in all things? Are we harassed by doubt, temptation, fears, till the enemy has the upper-hand, and we stand in dread lest we lose our spiritual strength altogether? Let this be the time—(for, "*Behold, now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salva-

tion")—let *this* be the time when we shall examine and pray, use all diligence and put forth all labour, that we may be able to rejoice in the love of God, to repose in dependence on his grace; that we may have "the whole armour of God," so as "to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." The battle may go hard for a time; the army of the aliens may press around you; but, be courageous and confident in your Leader! for he will strengthen you for the contest—follow in his footsteps! for there is conquest in his track—grasp your shield with a firm arm to the last! for the sound, ringing over the elect host and falling on your dying ear, shall be, "Victory!" Fear not the passage of Jordan! for the greeting from the shining bands as you tread the shore of eternal deliverance shall be, "Victory, through the blood of the Lamb!" O, yes! it is in the hour of sternest trial, when the world fails in the promise made to the soul, when the true dependence of the deathless spirit is most vividly seen, that this confidence becomes glorified and illustrious. Is it not so? Inquire of the benighted heathen, who has been the slave of passion and tried nature in its true tendencies, as you shed the light of divine truth over his mind; as you lead him to the cross, and give him first to cast his soul on a God who careth for him; as you kindle within the rapture of hope while directing his astonished faith to a world of purer and brighter home. Inquire of

the poor man, stripped of earthly good, compelled to meet destitution in its worst forms, as he tells you he eats of bread which the world knows not of. Inquire of the mourning heart, called to lay in the lone, oblivious grave the dearest earthly object, as smiling through her tears she points you to the Redeemer's unveiled sepulchre, and then to a happy world where spirit greets spirit on the plains of light. Could we bring before you the death-bed scenes of those who have had nothing on which to lean as they were launched into eternity but the flitting things of time, we might show you more fully the value of such confidence as this. Then is the enchantment of earth broken; and truly has it been said, "Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die." Some have bowed down before the idol gold, and enshrined it for the luxury, the honour, the pageant show it gives; some have thought to find undecaying joys in the nectar-bowls of sensual delight; some have cradled in dreamy imaginings the glory of human applause and distinction; some have even

"Scrambled up to thrones,
And eat in vestures dripping wet with gore."

But did one of them have a happy death-bed, unless he renounced his profane idolatry? O what repentings! what lamentations! what stinging remorse! what warning to others! Ahead all was blackness, pierced only by the lightnings of eternal wrath—

"Till the earth
Beneath them broke, and wrapt them in the grave."

But go to that chamber where the dying saint is
departing to his reward.

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileged beyond the common walks of virtuous life,
Quite on the verge of heaven."

Perhaps he is an old soldier, a veteran of the cross—one who has borne the burden and heat of the day—one who has tested fully the excellency of Paul's shield in many and many a battle; and now, covered with dust and wounds, it may be, he meets his last foe. Firm has he been, at his post of danger and privation, to the last. Is there misgiving and fearful foreboding here? No! He recounts his toil and battle, and shouts anew as in the vigour of youth. His legacy to his weeping friends and children is, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." See him patiently endure as he suffers his last agony! See him struggle as he baffles his last enemy! See him triumph as he dies, and goes to receive the crown from his Master's hand!

"O, is it not a noble thing to die
As dies the Christian with his armour on?
What is the hero's clarion, though its blast
Ring with the mastery of a world, to this?"

Though the whole world prefer the follies of this life, give me *this* confidence when I come to die. Though others choose to meet the "seven last thunders," and see their last hopes destroyed in a blazing world and the fiery, blasting wrath of God out of Christ, give me this confidence in that great day when I must reap what I have sown!

— Is there one in this assemblage unpossessed of this confidence? O what have you, if you have not this? Nothing but distrust of yourself and of all around you. Nothing but restlessness here, and threatening on the horizon of the future. Have you the things which the worldly call good? Those influences that would persuade you to trust in them are liars and traitors, and Satan is father of them. Heed them not. Let others blaspheme God, and bow before sense; let the hungry, reckless spendthrifts of the most precious privileges seek to slake their thirst at the empty cisterns of earthly vanity; let them chase each other through the follies and madness of earthly disappointment; let them gayly dance on the brink of despair! They know not what they do; but they are wilfully blind. O sell not *your* soul for so paltry a price! O barter not your *soul* for eternal misery! Turn! Look at this confidence! See it spreading quietude and joy over the hearts and relations of men! See it swelling the soul of the saint, and making him shout in praise to

God and gratulation to himself! See its object; is it not worthy of embrace? See the vastness of its reward; is it not worth striving to possess? The pursuits and rewards of earth vanish in its light. How many things—yea, all things—urge you to place in Christ your confidence. Is it not enough that when he “shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory?” O that I could show it to you! Rest not one moment till you can claim it as your own!

IX.

Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

DAN. v, 27.

THE aim of divine revelation is to attract our thought, and love, and confidence, away from this world, which must so soon be forsaken, to a spiritual and heavenly, which may be our eternal residence. And in how great a variety of ways does it address us for this end! The Bible speaks as the immediate oracle of God, demanding obedience because it is God who commands. It appeals to man's sense of his own interest and welfare. It threatens the fears by proclaiming utter and inevitable misery if he persist in rebellion. It allures, by promises of happiness, to final endurance in well-doing. Yet all is one harmonious whole, and tending to the same great end—exhibiting the perfect attributes of Deity,

and the relations and duties of man: so that, if we pursue the meaning of one portion, we have no fear of conflict with another. Often, for the sake of illustrating and impressing its principles, it causes to pass before us an imposing spectacle of human action, an exhibition of the practical and momentous results of wickedness or piety; as in a panorama of lively colours, and glowing but truthful imagery, we are often called on to look at the falsity and poverty of the present world, with its pursuits, contrasted with the glories and value of the world to come. For instance, how impressive a scene is that from which the text is taken! Is not the pageant of earthly pleasure here passing before us in all its hollow glitter, its frantic mockery, its awful doom? Let us look at it.

Belshazzar, the Chaldean king, has gathered about his board his "thousand" of great men and officers, his wives and concubines. It seems to be the festive anniversary of some great event. Amid the shining assemblage of his court, the luxurious entertainment, the richness and splendour of Babylon concentrated here, he gives himself up to wine and revel, regardless of the conqueror at his gates. At the height of the carousal, while mocking the Lord of heaven, and exalting the senseless idols of gold, and iron, and wood, as the deities who had conferred victory and power, he commands that the sacred vessels of the temple be brought in to the ban-

quiet. These are desecrated by their wanton, impious frolic; for it is said that "the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, drank in them." But the measure of the monarch's iniquity is full; for "in that same hour," &c. Dan. v, 5. O, how easily God can strike terror to the guilty heart! How quickly God can change the madness of mirth to the quaking of more than mortal fear! The consciousness of crime awakes the monarch from his stupor, and "his thoughts troubled him." Conscience tells a bitter story of wrong, and points with a fearful foreboding to retribution, so that his "countenance was changed." The minions around him see his trembling; for "the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." He cries for the soothsayers and sages. He promises to that one who would make known the mystic characters, honour and wealth, and a place in the kingdom next his own son. Those letters stood out in light on the wall like so many accusing spectres. But God confounds their wisdom, and baffles their choicest skill. The queen-mother comes into the banquet-hall and thus addresses the king: "O king, live forever," &c. Dan. v, 10-12. This Daniel, this despised and long-forgotten servant of the living God, is called. He stands before the degenerate, youthful monarch. He is clothed in the wisdom and sanctity of nearly ninety years' communion with the skies. He is not the servant, but the master.

He is the messenger of Heaven. He declines the proffered honours, but consents to make known the interpretation. As a prelude, in order that the finger of Jehovah might be manifest, he recounts the dealing of "the most high God" with his father, Nebuchadnezzar—how he consolidated his power, stretched his empire, bowed nations submissive at his feet, made Babylon the city of magnificence—how, when he became "hardened in pride," ascribing these successes to his personal prowess, "he was deposed," &c. Dan. v, 20, 21. Daniel then brings it home upon the recreant king. Verses 22, 23. Now that the cup of thy rebellion overflows, this writing declares thy doom—"MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN:" that is, "He hath numbered, he hath numbered, he hath weighed, and they divide." Or, in the application of the prophet, Dan. v, 26-28. That same night the Persian turned the waters of the Euphrates, as they ran through the city, from their course; entered Babylon by the dried channel; slew Belshazzar, and "divided his kingdom." What a scene of judgment is this! We hope it will give to your minds illustration and enforcement of the words chosen for our present consideration.

I. "*Thou art weighed in the balances.*"

a. By the manner in which "the balances" are applied to Belshazzar, as well as by other expressions of the Holy Scripture, we are unhesitatingly led to believe them representative of the

moral constitution under the government of which divine wisdom has placed man. By the provisions of this he determines his character and awards his destiny. This visible embodiment of God's will may be designated in general as the moral law and the law of faith. The former criterion of moral good and evil is comprised in a grand compend by the words of the Lawgiver: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment." That is, the sincere language of the heart must be—"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee;" for all our thoughts and wishes must flow towards him, all our delight and enjoyment must come from him as the great fountain of all. Besides, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Not only the relative, or friend, or associate, or acquaintance; but every child of Adam, every living soul. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." "There is none other commandment greater than these." Herein, then, we have the sum and substance, the beginning and ending of the moral law. That which the Apostle Paul calls the "law of faith" is the other portion of this constitution. It was ushered in by the sacrifice and atonement of the incarnate Son of God, the Saviour of the world. It had its occasion in the

fall and corruptness of man, and his consequent incompetence to keep the moral law. For all the powers of man were weakened, while all his tendencies were wandering from God; and the mercy of God manifested itself in the incarnation of the Son to impart to erring, helpless man hope and strength. He was anointed the Christ, to be our prophet, priest, and king. He came to "redeem us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." So that the gospel, or this law of faith, is revealed to remedy the defects of man's condition, holding out alluring promises and infusing sufficient strength from the Holy Spirit, which is the gift of Jesus Christ. The principle of this law, then, is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as our only Saviour. It does not destroy the claims of the moral law; for Christ says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." It strengthens the claims of the moral law, in that it supplies us with power to obey. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." In these two great departments, then, if we choose thus to consider them, although in the attainment of salvation they are inseparably united, we find the sum of all duty.

b. Such, in brief, is the moral constitution under which God places man. It infinitely excels all the theories and systems which created ingenuity has devised for the regulation and determination of human conduct. Its vastness, its majesty, its perfectness, should attract the worship of all. It forms the just balances which the Most High stretches out, wherein he weighs the worth and decides the destiny of the children of men. In the one scale are the requisitions laid down by his all-perfect mind as the standard; in the other are all the elements and relations that must enter into the calculation of man's heirship to the eternal state. With an eye to the final judgment of the great day, every moral action is marked and weighed as performed by the human actors. Hence it becomes a solemn and startling truth, that the process of weighing every accountable subject of divine government is proceeding. Even while gathered in this consecrated temple, Jehovah is taking strict cognizance of every action, motive, desire. The same God that sat in judgment upon the idolatrous Belshazzar, yet "sitteth upon the circle of the earth," as its governor and ruler, as head of all authority and administration. He yet holds in his hands the balances of justice, and tests the ways of man. We are all, we are always, in these balances of the Almighty. "He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven." He "hath measured the waters

in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." This great Being can, with one glance of his omniscience, scan the universe of existence, and pronounce upon the deserving of all. Nothing but the mercy of the Lord our gracious Mediator and Intercessor restrains the full execution of that sentence for which our crimes so loudly call. Nor let us forget the strictness with which the divine rule of faith and action is applied. It embraces the whole accountable existence. It takes in the whole man—not the apparent life alone, but the heart. It recognises not wrong to our fellow-men alone, but that which offends the purity of a perfect God; hence it requires, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." It marks not only the bowing down to idols made by man's hands, but the straying of affection and trust from God; not only the flash of anger from the eye and the malicious taunt from the lips, but the bitter feeling and malignant wish; not only the bloody deed of crime and rapacity at which the arm of human law strikes the blow of death, but the harbouring of hate and the purpose of revenge; not only the polluting stain of licentiousness, which some outbreking may have bared to the contempt of the world, but every impure and wanton aspiration, which would be gratified if it could. The very terms of the covenant of grace

declare that Adamic obedience is not required of us. His was unsullied and entire in all its parts, constant and unsinning: one single transgression must have blasted our hopes forever, if we must come up to the law of Eden. His nature was created spotless, and fitted for the holiest communion, and capable of the fullest obedience; we are conceived in sin and are naturally, as well as actually, sinners, and are totally dependent for every holy wish and endeavour upon the free influences of the Holy Spirit: yet, the dispensation under which we are placed requires holiness. Temptation may beset us, ignorance may darken us, frailty may render us imperfect; yet our life must be hid with Christ in God, our powers must all be in his service, our joy and hope and confidence must centre in our redeeming Lord. And to this the Spirit calls us.

2. "*And art found wanting.*"

When we remember how nicely adjusted are the balances of the Almighty; what a strict account is taken of the ways of men, noting both the undeveloped operations of the machinery within and the results in the outer life, we are compelled to the conclusion that many, of very different character in the estimate of man, must meet the same fearful curse that astonished the guilty king—Thou art found wanting! In pointing out such, we should be cautious, and not wear the sandals of a worldly charity; for none

but Him who directs the process will finally distinguish the wanting. Still, the principles of the gospel are plain, and the lives of men are good indications of their obedience or disobedience. In applying these to character, we find the number of the wanting is fearfully large.

a. "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." The denouncement of the text is launched against far too many professing Christians. How high our privileges in comparison with the light and sacred influence in Belshazzar's day! Yet we find the delinquents even within the pale of that Church which Christ has established, for whose holiness he has bestowed so many precious gifts, poured out so much holy blood, shed forth so many heavenly influences. Let us examine if it be not so. And if the truth pierce me, or any of you, do not let us turn it aside, or attempt to apply it to another. I speak now to those who bear the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as such are held bound by the Church, and by the world, to exhibit his spirit. How many come up faithfully to the work God has laid upon them? How many fulfil "the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith?" I am aware that He to whom we must answer regards the uprightness of the motive, and the fulness of the effort, rather than the perfection of the work; yet how little of sincerity or of entire devotion is in our labour! How many can feel that they

are the children of God,—can look up and cry, “Abba, Father?” How many hearts are meek and lowly in temper,—spotless in desire? How many have that spirit of love which was in Christ, pulsating and animating, not to say in degree, but in kind? How many are willing to make themselves of no reputation, and take upon them the form of a servant, that they may minister to the temporal and spiritual wants of others? How many, instead of comparing themselves with some fellow-sinner, and, by reason of fancied superiority, swelling with pride and arrogance, rather contrast themselves with the glory and excellency of God in Christ, in his infinite condescension and grace to them as disobedient rebels, in his mercy to them as miserable and helpless sinners,—thus sinking into contrition of heart and renunciation of self? How many keep “the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom,” before their eyes with engrossing affection, with filial awe? How many love not the world, nor the things thereof, but would gladly sacrifice them for greater abundance of “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost?” How many continually bring the light of eternity to bear upon every earthly object, till the bubbles of time’s pleasure break in air,—till its interests dwindle away to a sightless point,—till its joys wither and lose their relish,—while the soul chooses the rich clusters faith brings from the better land? How

many preserve the same serene tranquillity, however tossing the sea and driving the storm, since they have an anchor "sure and steadfast, and which entereth to that within the veil?" How many are ready to meet their Lord, long for his coming, to stand before the throne, to be clothed upon with their house in heaven, because Christ is already formed within them here; would not be confounded by the song of heaven, nor frightened should its glory break around the spirit, because it has looked and prayed for its revelation; would rejoice to hail the fellowship of pious saints, where—

“—— All the ship’s company meet,
Who sail’d with their Saviour beneath;
With shouting each other they greet,
And triumph o’er trouble and death?”

Glory to the grace of God, there are such! But have we not too often to look here and there far away yonder for them? Too many, who are robed in the holy and responsible profession of likeness to the great Head of the Church, must be found wanting in the graces and virtues of the gospel of peace when weighed in Heaven’s balances! Likewise are we too destitute of the fruits of the Spirit outwardly. It is required that we not only “depart from evil,” but learn to “do good;” that we not only be “redeemed from iniquity,” but be “zealous of good works.” In the purpose of God, we are the “salt of the

earth," but the leavening influence is under our own control; we are the "light of the world," but we may or may not let our light shine. We may or may not fulfil the will of God in our high calling. But inaction is death to the soul. God never designed that the grace in our hearts should burn, as if restrained beneath a bushel, for our own illumination alone, till the fuel that feeds the pent flame be exhausted, and then expire in its own gloom. For the feeblest of us has one talent. Every one has a work to do. The lowliest may shine afar for the glory of God. How often has the light from some humble, secluded cottage in the dark wilderness guided the benighted traveller to a safe and cheerful home! O, to how many professing Christians, nominally alive but really dead, must the trial of God's balances prove fatal, when brought to bear upon their active solicitude for the salvation of others! Does not this tell of fearful short-coming in the heart and in the closet? There is danger of condemnation to us, brethren! And why? Because we roughly spurned the brother of Christ when "a hungered?" No; but we gave him no meat. Because we shamefully abused the "thirsty" one? No; but we gave him no drink. Because we wilfully maltreated the "stranger?" No; but we took him not in. Because we beat the "naked" with many stripes? No; but we clothed him not. Because we lawlessly sought the death of the

“prisoner?” No; but we left him to his fate. Because we inflicted injury upon the poor, infirm Lazarus, who lay at our gate? No; but we passed him by in cold, scornful silence. Because we have squandered or thrown away our single talent? No; but we have carefully wrapped it in a napkin, and hid it away in obscurity and inaction. Because we have produced evil fruit? No; but we have been barren. May not the Laodicean curse come upon us?—“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” O, with what utter contempt must God look upon a professing Christian who will refrain for fear of what man can say or do, who will permit pride of opinion to prevent from bearing the cross and confessing the Lord, who will suffer paltry excuses of a wearied body, or unusual business, or fear of responsibility, to detain from the post of danger and of active duty!

My beloved fellow-believer, are not these things true? Is it not plain truth? Unless we are plain with ourselves, God will be plain with us. And do we not find here all the cause of Church inefficiency and the world's ruin? While our hearts have been wanting in diffusive love and burning sympathy; while we have not gloried in the cross of Christ, “by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world;” while

“the priests, the ministers of the Lord,” have not wept “between the porch and the altar,” and cried, “Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach,” and the people have not laboured with the life of the Spirit, it is nothing strange that so little is accomplished among us coördinate with the designs of the gospel. I have no disposition for unnecessary railing against preachers or people—I find no one so faulty as myself; but the heart is almost sad and sick in looking abroad over Zion, and marking her bulwarks. How little vital piety! How little struggle after sanctification! How little of Christ’s labour! And the spirit of the age seems downward. To what is to be attributed the decrease of membership in our own Church, during the past year, of more than thirty-six thousand? Nothing but giant effort in each individual can throw off the chains woven about us by the adversary of souls. If the Church fail, the world is lost. While it is too much a receptacle of decay and death, whose uncleanness is covered by a fair outward show, is it a wonder that so many sinners perish? that man is not regenerated? that “the heathen are not given to Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession?” that the pall of death spread over the once lifeful earth is not lifted, and the effulgence of a new-risen life poured in upon man? Is it not rather a wonder that the curse of the

dying mother of Ichabod, when she thought of the removal of the ark of God, is not written in fire upon the walls of Zion?—"The glory is departed from Israel." Are we not as individuals, are we not as the Church of Christ, perilously wanting when weighed in the impartial balances of divine equity—when brought to the stern test of the religion we have in this blessed Book? Let us humble ourselves in the dust. Let us begin afresh. Let us exhort, and warn, and strengthen each other. Let us throw aside all bitter feeling, and, in the spirit of love for each other's souls and hatred to sin, make ceaseless warfare against our common foe.

b. We shall have time merely to glance at some other points we intended to notice more at large. There is an unfortunate class of men, deluded by their own conceit, lured on to ruin by their vain-glory. They strive to be pure by some intrinsic goodness, or by some self-worthy effort, so that they may hold out weight. They imagine they have salvation within reach of their own meritorious works. They vainly think, that by distinguished zeal for ceremonies and formalities, together with a life seemingly harmless toward others, they will be able to endure the test of these balances. But, "if righteousness come by the law, then is Christ dead in vain." Step into the scale, thou formalist and moralist! What opposes you, and sends you, lighter than vanity, into the air? "Whosoever

shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Have you never offended "in one point?" You have. Then you are unjustified, for the law never forgives. A single sinful commission or omission destroys your hope, if it depend on this; and you are already lost beyond recovery. Do you claim a negative holiness? And what is that? You say you worship no earthly gods: well, granting it so, I ask for your reverence, and love, and faith toward the only living and true God and his Son Jesus Christ. You say vice has no dominion over you: supposing it so, I ask, What holy virtue has sprung up in its place? You say you are no extortioner; but confess, now, did you never covet your neighbour's fine possessions? You say you are no adulterer; but have you always been pure and without iniquity within? So you vaunt much, but where lies the truth? Here: you are a sinner without pardon! You are terribly "wanting." There is written upon the wall of your sanctuary—"For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

c. But there are those more fatally wanting, if possible, than even these. They say, "Who is the Lord, that we should obey him?" They are the victims of their own carnal and perverse hearts. They boldly conspire against the require-

ments of God. "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." They lift the high hand of rebellion, and stretch out the proud arm of defiance. O what madness in puny man! Such sin as this must be the worst of evils, and such a sinner must be the worst of beings. Can we suppose that a God of unbending purity and changeless veracity, who has surrounded his truth with such terrible sanction, will suffer it to be thus violated with impunity? No! God will not always chide, nor delay his just punishment. He will render "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." Rejoice, thou self-deceiving sinner, if you will, in the feast of earthly delights you have spread for miserable lust; gather around you every minister of your will; light up the gorgeous banquet-scene with all the glitter and splendour of earth; bring forth those powers of spirit and body which God has mysteriously united that he might have a temple devoted to his worship, and desecrate the sacred vessels by your unholy mirth and wicked revelry! Thus mock your God. Thus despise his goodness. Thus laugh at his power. But, beware! Your deeds must be brought to light. You must come into judgment. Even now he may be placing your deeds together in the balances, and pronouncing them altogether lighter than vanity. Even now the finger of his judgment may be writing out your sentence, upon

the walls of your tabernacle in burning letters of fiery indignation. Even now the Spirit may interpret them to your conscience—"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." But we believe there is yet time to turn and live. You may yet forsake your sins. Now you may repent and believe. It may be said concerning you, precious sinner: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." I pray you, in the name of Christ, be sober—be humbled to tears and repentance for your sins—be earnest with your whole soul for salvation. Do this work quickly, lest the day of your visitation close, and the righteous anger of God pronounce its curse.

We mention but one closing inference. If man fall short of the weight required by the holy constitution under which divine wisdom has placed him, it is his own fault, and through his own scorning; therefore he alone must meet the consequence. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." So that man is placed in a state of initial salvation, where he has full opportunity to

insure eternal redemption, by personal obedience to the requirements of the gospel. A wide refuge is thrown open. A full hope beams upon us from the smile of Heaven. Christ has made an atonement, and it is for us all; no more for me than you, or you than me; no more for either of us than the Hottentot or the New-Zealander. Now he is before the throne. Now his hand restrains the uplifted sword of justice flashing upon the guilty sinner, and waits his submission. How sufficient is the salvation he offers! It will make us "perfect and entire, wanting nothing;" so pure that even these balances of Jehovah shall find us faultless, and we shall be "found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." Power will be given us all to effect this work, and it depends on ourselves to accomplish it. How awful to hear—"Wanting! wanting, through thine own choice!"—ringing in our ears eternally! O that we might now choose life, that we may live!

X.

I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.—1 TIM. ii, 8.

THE will of a superior expressed concerning our performance of any action is considered to be a command. The apostle spoke under the charter of his great commission, by the command of our

Lord Jesus Christ, in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. His message, therefore, we must consider as coming from him whose servant he was, and whose word he proclaimed. He utters this language with authority, as one who speaks in the stead of the Master. We shall, however, pass over any particular consideration of the injunction of universal prayer—"I will that men pray everywhere"—and examine the character of prayer as set forth in the words—"lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

I. It will shed light upon this subject to remember, in the first place, to whom prayer is addressed. To whom are we to lift up our hands? To God. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." "Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High." The blessings to which prayer looks are not within the reach of any created being to bestow. It has reference to the relations sustained between the Divine Being and man, and the free gifts of which we are the recipients—the undeserved communication of the most needed mercies of the present state of existence—the forgiveness of offences committed against the divine righteousness—the felicities of future and endless life. Therefore, if it be addressed to any inferior intelligences or powers; to any spirit among the angel-hosts, however pure its brightness; to any glorified saint,

however radiant the crown of his victory and rejoicing, the word of God pronounces upon it the severest denunciation. Not only because of its idle vanity as directed to beings helpless in themselves, but because it makes another than the one Lord supreme, and is guilty of the grossest idolatry. Prayer, then, is the direct medium of intercourse between the human soul and its God. God, in his triune nature, is the sole object of worship. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, presents the mode of this worship: "Through him [that is, Christ Jesus] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." The Father is the original fountain of blessing—Christ is the way of our approach into his presence—the Spirit gives us strength and all needed assistance that we may pray aright and successfully. Thus it is evident that prayer is always the voice of dependence and trust. Its language is, "Our Father, which art in heaven;" regarding him as the Creator and continuator of being, and especially as the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." As our Father, it lays hold of his benevolence, and tender solicitude for our welfare; as our Father in heaven, it looks at his greatness and supremacy, his resource and power. It has been defined to be "a solemn addressing of our minds to God, as the fountain of being and happiness, as the ruler of the world, and the father of the family of man." Also, "an offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to his

will, in the name of Christ, by the help of the Spirit, with the confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies." As to the character of God, it acknowledges with reverence and delight his sovereignty, and adores his goodness. As to the sinfulness and unworthiness of the human heart, it is the humble and repentant confession of guilt. As to the need of salvation, it becomes the voice of earnest entreaty for pardon and grace—"God be merciful to me, a sinner." As to the danger of others, it is the breaking forth of full and far-reaching concern for the rescue of souls exposed to the fiery indignation of divine justice. While it is the plea of the suppliant, it is the outpouring of gratitude for the untold mercies bestowed already. Thus it always looks to God.

II. "Lifting up holy hands." It was a custom of the Jews and of some Gentiles to wash their hands before prayer, as emblematic of pure purposes. But the apostle would have them holy not only in the sign, but truly at heart; not occasionally, but habitually. So, likewise, the Psalmist declared: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." The expression in the text has particular reference to our conduct and ac-

tion. We must be holy in our dealing with man, else it will be vain to assume it when we hold intercourse immediately with God; we must be holy in all practice of the life, free from both open and private crime and guilt. It will not do to be impious toward the commandments of God, to be vicious in our personal habits and in our relations to men, then, when we come before God in prayer, to wash our hands in the cleansing of a timely and superficial repentance, and hope to stretch forth "holy hands" toward heaven. This is mockery. The desire, and expectation, and sincere resolve of the heart must be for the character and image of God; and this purpose of heart will be conspicuous in our life. "The preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue" must not be after the manner of men, but from a pervading effort of the soul after "holiness to the Lord."

This language is a beautiful representation of real prayer, since it is so significant of humble, beseeching importunity. The necessity of this in our petitions is exhibited by our Lord in his instructions to the disciples: "He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves: for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: for the door is now shut, and my children are with me

in bed ; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you," &c. Of the same import is the parable of the widow and the unjust judge, which he spake to the end that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Such was the character of Paul's prayer when he besought the Lord concerning his "thorn in the flesh." Sensible of our want and helplessness, our petition is to be earnest, importunate. It is the lifting up of our entire soul to God ; and as such, supposes the enlistment of thought and desire in singleness of aim and fulness of purpose. It must be importunate. A praying heart, one communing with God, cannot be that hollow-hearted, hypocritical spirit which loves to pray standing in the synagogues, and at the corners of the streets, to be seen of men ; but when the heart is in earnest with God, the pure incense ascends from the altar of the most inward and heartfelt devotion ; not according to the number of people that may stand around to listen and lavish praise, but as the crowding, pressing necessities of the famishing soul call for the bread of life, and demand succour and relief. The Jews were severely reprov'd for drawing nigh with their lips, while their hearts were far away ; because "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."

It is not the approach of the body, but the nearness of the soul that he requires ; and if the heart realize the character of Him with whom it has to do, or the great ends of its worship, or its connexion with the interests that lie beyond this scene of things, it will never thus insult Deity and wrong itself. The petition may go up as a silent effusion, or from the closet, or from the social gathering, or from around the family hearth, or as with one voice from the great assembly ; but it is not the nominal description, nor the mere place, which constitute an acceptable petition ; for unless the heart feel the responsibility of its relations, and is raised into struggle with God for power to discharge the duties imposed by them, there is no true prayer. We may prostrate ourselves in the dust, or bend the knee, or stand erect if we can get into no lowlier position ; but it is not the posture which sanctifies the petition ; and if the heart be not prostrate beneath a sense of the mountain-load of iniquity, if it be not bowed in humility by reason of unsatisfied want and total dependence, there is no true prayer. We have the most exquisitely finished and nicely adapted liturgy or formulary made ready to our hands, or our addresses may be the instantaneous acknowledgment of our want—we may be able to give utterance to breathing thoughts in burning words, or our

“—— Thought be broken, language lame ;”

but, it is not the beauty and accuracy of the style which is pleasing to the Most High : for unless the thought be concentrated in God, unless the energy of holy desire be uncaged, unless the sacred love be burning, there is no true prayer. The earnest worship of a heart, appreciating the greatness of its attitude before God, and the importance of the blessings sought, must be in it all.

III. "Without wrath." This is a most important declaration ; for how can we hope to find favour with a God whose name and nature are love, if we are destitute of the spirit of love, and are filled with rancorous and hateful feelings and designs ? "Forgive, if ye have aught against any : that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy ;" "for with the same measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." When we come into the presence of Infinite Love, we must not only feel that this best of beings is worthy of adoration, but we must be without wrathful feeling toward our brother man. Indeed, how can we love God, unless we love him who bears the same nature with ourselves, and stands in the same relations to the Almighty ? We must go further than merely loving those who treat us with kindness : "Ye have heard that it hath been said,

Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Prayer must be the overflowing of love for universal man, and of longing for the salvation of each individual. It must not be embittered by any feeling of anger or harboured revenge. A sense of our own faultiness should spare the imperfections of another. The heart that loves God will know how to yearn over a fellow-man; so that, when it comes to the throne of grace burdened with the weight of souls, O how tenderly it pleads, how mightily it struggles! This love is universal. It breaks up the ice-bound selfishness of the heart. It rushes from its pent enclosure. It embraces the vilest enemy, and bids him be reconciled to God. It reaches the whole world of man. Could there be in humanity a sublimer spectacle than a heart free from wrath, unstained by bitterness, filled and ardent with the purest love, weeping and praying for the highest of blessings upon its worst foes? Look at Jesus, pierced and nailed to the cross, as, lifted up before a scornful world, he prays, "Father, forgive them."

IV. "And doubting." "Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." In

a very general sense, faith may be considered as belief beyond the evidence of the senses; and where certitude of knowledge from this source has its limit, there begins the province of faith. But there may be a belief of the divine testimonies with no more gospel faith than wicked men or the damned spirits possess. Saving faith, such as renders prayer availing, takes hold of the foundation of the heart, and it works by love. It is entire trust in the efficacy of the atonement by Jesus Christ, feeling and acknowledging the depravity and self-despair of the heart. It embraces not only the universality but the individuality of the provisions of salvation. It grasps Christ as a last refuge, and for an eternal portion. "Have faith in God," then, when you approach him in prayer! The Spirit gives this powerful faith, and directs its application. We cannot realize the guiltiness and unfitness of the human heart, the impossibility of praying successfully of ourselves, or the ability of Christ to save, without the light and aid of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this must be the inspiring, controlling power. The inward influence of the Spirit is the life of faithful prayer; for it instructs our ignorance of what we need—"it helpeth our infirmities"—it "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." It must be in every act of supplication, breathing into faith its vigour, encircling it with active warmth. Without it, prayer must be faithless and inef-

ficient—a statue without life—a body without soul. Thus is faith enabled to lay hold of Christ as the only cause and source of blessing, and to interpret his own words, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life;” so that the sole medium of communication with the Father of spirits is opened: for “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” The Son of God is seen and felt to be the Days-man—the Mediator, standing midway, forming the chain which joins earth to heaven—the Restorer, bringing man back to the ennobling prerogatives he had forfeited—“our great High-Priest,” who has “passed into the heavens,” and “can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” having been “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” In the ministry of the ancient law, the high-priest bore upon his shoulder and breast the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, in order that, at his yearly entrance into the holy of holies to make atonement for the sins of the people, God might view in him the representative of Israel, and hear his intercession, and accept his sacrifice in their behalf. But the faith of the Christian addresses a more glorious High-Priest, who has passed into the heaven of heavens, who is Jesus the Son of God; and there, in the sanctuary on high, in the immediate presence of the heavenly glory, in the royal majesty which he had from everlasting with the Father, in the greatness of his power, he “shows his wounds and spreads his hands,”

and always—not once a year only—always pleads for us, and presents, for the expiation of our guilt, that sacrifice of infinite merit which will fully atone, in the eye of a just God, for the darkest and most heinous crimes against the holy law. Faith realizes that nothing but the incense of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, offered up in the censer of his spotless purity and boundless love, can impart worthiness and acceptancy to our devotion. But, if we ask according to the direction of the Spirit, faith anticipates abundant success: “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” Such is the character and the scope of this faith as an essential element of our prayer. And O what wonders has it wrought! What a powerful arm has it wielded in verifying the promises of Jehovah!

These are some of the prominent characteristics, as standing forth in the text, to be found in all genuine Christian supplication at the throne of grace. Is this the character of the petitions which we offer to the mercy-seat? Do we realize that it is the great and good God to whom we pray, before whom all hearts and ways are manifest? Let us keep in mind that “a hypocrite shall not come before him.” Do we not

often come with impure desires and habits, which lurk in the secret places of our hearts, and which we are yet unwilling to surrender? Remember that, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Do we not often take advantage of our free and continued access to the throne, to persist in some practices that are unjust, and discountenanced by the sacred word? Do we examine and study our necessities, and press them upon the waking consciousness, so that when we open the mouth of prayer we are truly and sincerely earnest in our request? Or is our importunity all apparent and external, venting itself in noisy vehemence, without fervency of soul, which sometimes burns like a smothered flame, the more intense because unable to find expression? Let us not forget that it is the struggle of the soul that prevails with God; at the same time this travail of spirit, this forgetfulness of the eye of man, this fixed looking to Heaven, will be made known, quite without exception, in the word, from the countenance, throughout the action. Have we the spirit of universally embracing love, which encompasses the welfare of all mankind? Or is there some covert jealousy, some fostered dislike, some unconfessed hostility toward our fellow-man? Do we lift the voice of prayer with the full realizing faith of the gospel, apprehending the sacrifice of Christ for our sin, and appropriating the promised blessings flowing from it? Or do we waste

our energy in useless disputations upon this or that point of faith, never coming to that point of surrender to which the Spirit would lead us? Let us examine ourselves, and see if there is not room for improvement in these essential particulars. Let us, in the first place, like the disciples of old, approach to Jesus, and beseech, "Lord, teach us to pray!" May he pour out upon us all the spirit of true, prevailing supplication, that we may present a "spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ."

XI.

And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

HEB. xi, 13.

IF we may draw from the conduct of men correct conclusions concerning their belief, we should unhesitatingly declare that the great mass expected to live on the earth forever. But all men are strangers and pilgrims in this life; they are in a strange land and surrounded by foes; they are travelling onward, and have here no continuing city. The words of our text, however, relate to such men of faith as Abel, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob; and we may notice an important difference between the follower of Christ and the worldling. The one whose hope is not in God is unwillingly a stranger and pilgrim. He may be conscious that this is not the place of his abode—

that he journeys away from the objects so long his delight and dependence ; but he would not leave them if he could stay with them. He dislikes to acknowledge the truth, which forces its testimonies upon him everywhere. But, under the dread compulsion, he clings stoutly to these enjoyments, and often hugs the chains of his degradation even in death. Earth is his only source of joy, and he fears to forsake it. He cannot say—

“I would not live away,”—

but he would gladly embrace this sinful, troublesome world as his eternal portion, and consent to be forever restrained in his being by the clogs of this mortal coil. The Christian, like the saints of old, rejoices to “confess” himself a stranger and pilgrim on the earth. From this point he begins his course. He is a pilgrim, not only in reality of circumstance, but also in disposition and desire of heart. He would not have his state otherwise. With willingness, yea joyfulness, he contemplates the necessity of forsaking this world, for his eye of faith is fixed on a better and enduring substance. As he goes on, therefore, we hear him exclaim with exultation : “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” This is not the place of his nativity. He has been born from above, and he is

like a wanderer from home. He regards this as a stranger-country, full of hidden foes and replete with dangers; but he looks on to "a better, that is, a heavenly"—his native-land of rest and life. The full purpose of his heart is to stop in this vale of tears only to discharge his duties, and transact the work allotted him, then hasten away at the call of his Master. Thus, to the Christian traveller, thoughts of his changeful state are become joyous.

The topic we propose for consideration at this time is the conduct which should characterize the Christian in this view of his earthly condition. Of course, amid the multitude of thoughts which naturally arise out of the subject, we can present but a few points in the outline, and must leave the rest to your reflection.

1. As thorough knowledge as possible of the directest way he can pursue should be obtained. The divine word is the only perfect chart of the whole land through which he passes, and it marks out the straight path of salvation so clearly that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. He should seek no guide out of this. The deceitful agents of the father of deceptions may be ever ready to give information; but if any would direct to paths which comparison with this unerring map shows to be devious from that cast up for the ransomed of the Lord, they must be shunned as leading to sure destruction. Nature and reason are blind guides,

and have no light in themselves. If they shed any light upon our path, it is only reflection from the Source of all light, as the radiance of the moon in the evening is nothing but the reflected rays of the sun. They do not distinctly define the boundary between truth and error, between holiness and sin. But in these lively oracles are voices to warn us of danger, to point out to us the true and safe way, to cheer us in our toilsome journey. If we take this lamp to our feet and light to our path we shall never err. If we examine its declarations, we shall discover the true nature of the world around us, and the world within us. If we employ the means which it makes known, we shall be prepared for the changes and trials that await us, and find our pilgrimage pleasant to the end.

2. He should never dally with the worldly pleasures which surround him. It may seem strange to us that the Israelites, with a land before them that "flowed with milk and honey," so fertile and inviting was it, should choose to linger in the wilderness, and erect their idols, and revel in what their imaginations conceived the chiefest enjoyment, merely because it was present with them. But there are countless inducements to draw the heart of man, carnal in its tendencies, from desire for rectitude and devotion toward God. He is constantly exposed to the assaults of temptation, and liable to cast away the confidence he has reposed in his Re-

deemer. The wily enemy of our peace arranges his snares, and plies all his seductive arts to draw us from allegiance to God, till we fall into his dominion. Therefore the Christian stranger should look suspiciously upon the gifts of this world. Riches often accumulate, and hang upon the soul like dead weights; the zealous advocate for piety begins to lag behind, to lose his rapidity and earnestness, to become careless and indolent, and finally gives a broad ear to the whispers of the enticer and the flatteries of worldly favour. Power sometimes would persuade him to stop awhile, that he may sport with the fancies of men and the baubles of ambitious object. Pleasure dances around him, fragrant with all that can captivate the senses; she would deck him with her wreaths, and with her wanton fascinations allure him into paths of spiritual ruin. But the Christian has no time to devote to these follies. His race is to be run, the prize is to be won, and he must advance swiftly. A great work must be wrought, the moments are flying, and he must use all diligence. A decisive battle is to be fought with a cunning and desperate foe, and he must bring to bear all the wisdom and power divine grace may afford him. It becomes him, then, to stop his ears and run, crying, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, for life!

3. He should never yield to weariness or to fear. Surely it will not amend the way to sink beneath toil and suffering, or to be frightened

in the presence of danger. He must keep in mind that he follows a Leader who has travelled the whole celestial road before him, and experienced its difficulties,—

“And in his measure feels afresh,
What every member bears.”

All along to the kingdom he has set up way-marks for the guidance of the traveller. He has endured everything before us, and in every pang he sympathizes with us: “For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” Coming up to every mountainous obstacle, he has taken it away from before his footsteps; and he will give his all-powerful grace to it remove from our advance. He has borne the mightiest load, even the weight of the cross, and will give us strength for every burden. He has joined in conflict with the fiercest foes, and led them conquered at his chariot-wheels, and pledges us a like victory. What, then, have we to fear? Trial, too, refines and exalts the heart, fitting it for the unrevealed purity of the heavenly world. The more we undergo for our Master here, the more joyfully shall we approach him at the last day; and the glorious prospect of soon concluding our days of trouble and forgetting all sorrow, of reaching the land of peace, where nothing can perplex or endanger, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary rest, where sighing flees away

and joy is immortal, should appear as infinitely more than a recompense for all that can afflict us in this brief period. Let us, therefore, "glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

4. He should make careful and continual preparation for the land of his destination. We can only touch upon one prominent requisition here. It is no part of his creed to command the soul, Take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry; for to-morrow thou must die! Yet, how many live as though they heartily believed this! Though his days here be transient and uncertain, he may fully attend to all needful provisos for the world of spirits. In one respect this seems to be the reverse of treasuring for this world; for our Lord said to the rich ruler, "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." How much we hear in the Bible about the treasures on high! We are commanded to "lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also." So, also, it is said, "Provide for yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the

heavens that faileth not." Shall we not toil for a portion of those heavenly stores? Strange and visionary as the philosophy may seem to blinded infidelity, (and we pretend to account for it only on the assurance of this blessed word,) the more the Christian pilgrim diffuses while advancing in his heavenly journey, the more he lavishes in love upon his fellow-travellers, the richer must be the recompense which awaits him at the golden city. Shall he not, then, instead of storing barns and houses with those things that perish in the using, be adding to the stock of his heavenly inheritance, which will be imperishable, yea, increasing as endless ages roll away?

5. He must avoid a selfish and unsocial, or exclusive disposition. Many are pursuing the same course with himself, and he should always be ready to lend a helping hand. Some may become discouraged, and he should do his utmost to cheer them. Some may be doubtful and uncertain as to their position, and he should try to instruct, and point to the way of truth. Some, once diligent and steadfast, may be forsaking the straight path for by-paths which inevitably lead afar from all that is good and holy; and some, hoodwinked by the vanities of this world, may already be mingling with the multitude that throng the broad way to death. To such the Christian is compelled to lift the voice of warning. He may do it by reproof, by counsel,

by friendly converse, by calm argumentation—in various ways with different characters; but these, without a godly example, can accomplish but little. Although these labours of love for the salvation of souls are inseparable from the life of godliness, yet we may say that a life of exemplary holiness and devotion to God forms the most pointed rebuke to sin, and the strongest constraint to the sinner to turn his feet unto the testimonies of the gospel. Where the virtues of Christ control and actuate, where his meekness, and charity, and humility beam from the character and life, the sinner marks and must esteem the consistency and excellency of the profession. They shed a light upon the wanderer's path, even into his heart, which he may not resist. They surround their possessor with a halo of glory and holy majesty unimparted by all the pomp of earthly honour, and place him upon a loftier seat of heartfelt homage than the throne of nations. Such a Christian stands like a beacon upon some towering head-land; the celestial radiance of his pharos-light streams out afar over the tumultuous waters of life, and guides many a lost adventurer to the peaceful haven of eternal blessedness. God smiles upon him well-pleased. The Comforter visits him with hopes that are big with immortality and eternal life. While he strives to rescue the souls of others, his own heart dwells more and more in eternity. He can say—

"The things eternal I pursue;
A happiness beyond the view
Of those that basely pant
For things by nature felt and seen."

Shall we, then, my fellow-pilgrims, wish to journey alone? Shall we be content to sit down and quietly fold our arms, while the broad way is so thickly thronged with immortal spirits hurrying to their eternal doom?

6. He should bring to his heart the consolatory thought that he continually approaches his eternal home. This is the prerogative of the Christian pilgrim. The place of the saint's destination is variously described in the inspired Scriptures, but always as one of the highest felicity and desirableness. Still, it increases in glory and happiness to our spreading capacities as eternity approaches in its ceaseless rounds. The pilgrim-saint, looking toward the promised land, is cheered by the thought that there is his "Father's house!" there is his home—the home of the faithful. This Scriptural representation is drawn from the greenest, the fairest, the most happy spot of earthly residence, where the brightest associations have been formed, the most lasting connexions joined—where the fondest affections cluster. That heavenly will be a perfect home. The sweetest ties of mutual love and kindred pursuit will bind its inhabitants in harmony. There we shall always behold our Father's face, and rest in his love. There we shall ever have

the companionship of the glorified ones, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. There we shall look on the Lamb himself, the light of the place, in the midst of the throne—that Blessed One slain from the foundation of the world for our sin. The heart, purified from the jarring and discordant elements of earth, shall chime in the ceaseless music of heaven. If obedient unto death, *we* shall unite with the sons of God, the faithful patriarchs, the holy prophets, the worthy apostles, the sainted of all ages and climes, in ascribing “blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.” The Christian stranger and pilgrim on the earth is going home. What a home! Its “builder and maker is God.” And what must be the splendour and bliss of the place which God has prepared for his saints, where he shall show forth his presence! What a family!—the Triune God—the pure, bright spirits of the angel-bands—the eternal brotherhood of just men made perfect! O the employments of that happy place! “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him”—they are beyond human ken. In this world of disappointment, we are often separated from home; we may long for the communion of kindred hearts, and that longing be vain; we may be bereft of

those we love, and mourn their absence, but that mourning return with no answer of joy. There—for the heavenly Father hath spoken—no sorrowful parting shall ever be shaken, no heart-rending farewell ever uttered. It shall be an eternal union of redeemed spirits in the mansions of the blest. Such is the destination of the Christian pilgrim, however forlorn be his apparent condition here. The Bible gives us an outline-sketch, but the revelations of eternity must furnish the glowing fulness. Let the pilgrim rejoice! Let him shout aloud for joy! Glory to God for the glorious hopes of the gospel! What though time glide away with rapid step? What though, thief-like, he steal upon our unwary slumbers, and bear away the jewels of our trust—wealth, pleasure, honour, beauty, strength, loved ones? A triumphant thought arises amid all this wreck of earthly schemes—he wafts me on wings of love to my eternal home! The Christian looks on the passing moment, bearing away its record to eternity, as the forerunner of his own coming. He is carried far from sorrow, and pain, and sin, within sight of the land of his everlasting deliverance.

“Who, who would live alway, away from his God,
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,
Where rivers of pleasure flow bright o’er the plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns?”

“There saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet;

While anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."

Christian! You are a pilgrim; but the close of your pilgrimage must come. Some before me are young, but their course may be quickly finished. Some are blossoming for the grave, and stand now awaiting their summons. Christian, the past has been crowned with toil and temptation; but can you survey undismayed the final hour? Does your spirit, with exulting triumph, hail the eternal Sabbath? The evening hour of life must soon gather about you; and are you near your heavenly home? Does the music of those heavenly hosts come swelling in delight upon your ear? The French infidel, Rousseau, when he expected death, requested to be seated by the window, that, in the close of day, he might look out on the flush of glory the dying sunlight was shedding along the western skies; and he imagined that when that should fade from the horizon, the blackness of eternal night must settle over his spirit. O chilling infidelity! Is it thus with the Christian? No. He clambers to the top of the Pisgah of faith; and, while he sweetly breathes out his life upon the bosom of his Redeemer, the vision of undying faith stretches out before him.

"There is my house and portion fair;
My treasure and my heart are there,
And my abiding home;

For me my elder brethren stay,
And angels beckon me away,
And Jesus bids me come."

But, if the pilgrim on the earth be not thus supported, how miserably "without hope" is his situation! His heart is fixed on the good things of this world, and he must look on, helplessly and hopelessly, while they are torn from his power and enjoyment. He only catches a glimpse of happiness as he passes, and is shut up in outer darkness. He is approaching the term of his earthly possessions! The last hour comes on, and O what a dismal future! O let these truths hasten you to repentance, thou stranger to Jesus—thou pilgrim without hope!

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Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God.
Rev. iii, 12.

MOURN not for him—he's reach'd the spirit-world,
Reflecting glory brighter than the sun :
The cross laid down ; his gospel banner furled ;
And, life though brief, his Master's work well done.
But round the church a drapery of woe
Hangs pendent on its lofty columns here,
While tears of sorrow in profusion flow
Upon the youthful prophet's early bier.

Mourn not for him—though of thy hope bereft,
And life's fair vista dimm'd with gushing tears ;
Though now to thee no son on earth is left
To smoothe the pathway of declining years :
For he is gone that temple to adorn,
Whose graceful dome is the broad arch of heaven,
Beaming with light from that eternal morn,
Which ne'er shall know the fading hues of even.

Mourn not for him—though blest with talents rare,
And gifted with that unction from above,
The gospel of our Saviour to declare—
The heights and depths of his redeeming love.
Like to a polish'd shaft—the bow well bent—
He drew, to venture, truth's resistless dart
Dipp'd in that blood divine—directly sent
Conviction to the unbeliever's heart.

Mourn not for him—he is an angel now,
Freed from this earth, which dims the mental sight,
And heart-felt griefs, which often cloud the brow,
And throw around the intellect a blight.

Among the stars his spirit now can soar,
To reach those heights he strove on earth to find;
The works of God's immensity explore—
The wonders of his vast eternal mind.

Mourn not for him—he has gone up to meet
That brother^c wreck'd upon the ocean-wave,
Where the green sea-weed form'd his winding-sheet,
And the white coral reef his wat'ry grave;
Where sighing winds rang forth his funeral knell,
As they came booming o'er the mighty deep,
The tragic scene of Aaron's death to tell—
Where weeping Naiads still their vigils keep.

Mourn not for him—when round his dying bed
Angels were seen with bright, expanded wing,
Holding a starry crown above his head—
With heaven's transcendent glory glittering—
Waiting in silent rapture to convey
His sainted spirit to their blest abode,
Where seraphim their burnish'd plumes display,
To show the pathway to the throne of God.

"Mourn not for me!" the youthful preacher cries.
Though dead, he speaks in language eloquent.
He now looks out from yonder jasper skies,
As if on Jesus' kindly mission sent
To visit earth—to tell what passes there,
Where all is redolent of life and joy;
What fragrant flowers bloom in a clime so fair,
Where death no more their beauty can destroy!

JACKSON, LA., 1846.

S. B. THOMAS.

^c His elder brother, whose sad and melancholy fate was so deeply deplored in the awful catastrophe of the ship Home.

THE END.

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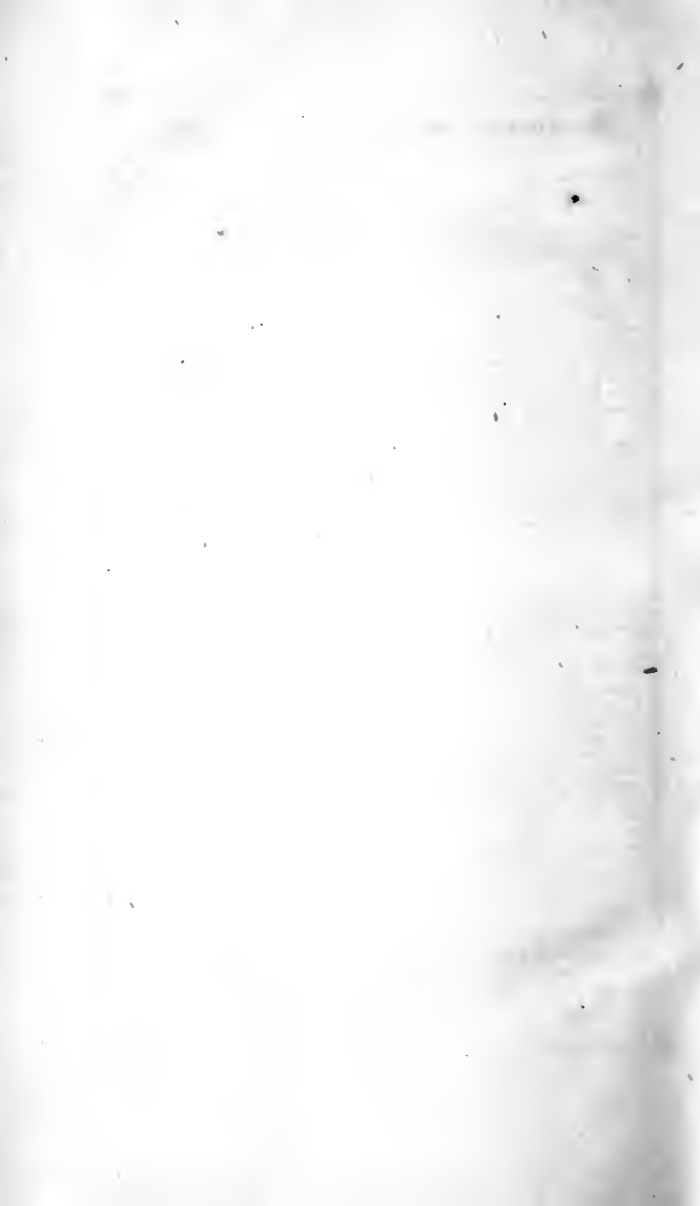
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